



Charter Renewal
Petition Submission
July 11, 2016

APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

Your Charter Application Package must comply with the following submission procedures.

- An Application Package includes an original and two copies of the following items:
 - APPLICATION COVER SHEET** (Use the form on pages 4-5; the form may not be altered in any way).
 - CHARTER APPLICATION** (Your answers to the questions posed on pages 7-14).
 - The Application is limited to 75 double-spaced pages using an 11-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins with a header showing the school's name and a footer showing consecutive page numbers.
 - The original must be signed in blue ink. Stamped signatures will not be accepted.
 - ASSURANCES FORM AND SIGNATURE SHEET** (Use the Assurances Form and Signature Sheet below on pages 15-18; the Form and the Sheet may not be altered in any way).
 - The original must be signed in blue ink; stamped signatures will not be accepted.
 - Electronic copy of assurances must be signed. Blank copies will not be accepted.
 - DOCUMENTATION OF VOTE *CONVERSIONS ONLY** (Use the form on page 19)
 - The original must be signed in blue ink; stamped signatures will not be accepted.
 - EXHIBITS** (See list of required Exhibits below on page 20).
 - Required Exhibits should be as limited in size as possible.
 - All Exhibits must be tabbed.
- Your Application Package must be bound by a binder clip; do not enclose your Application Package in a notebook, binder, or folder.
- Your Application Package must also include a single CD or USB drive that includes a:
 - Microsoft Word version of your Application Cover Sheet
 - Microsoft Word version of your Application and Exhibits
 - PDF Version of your application in the following order: Cover Sheet, Application, signed Assurances Form, and Exhibits
 - PDF version of your Governance Matrix
 - Excel version of your completed Budget Templates
 - Renewals only – an Excel version of your completed Self-Assessment

CHARTER APPLICATION COVER PAGES

Check one: New Start-Up New Conversion
 Start-up renewal Conversion Renewal

If renewal, when was the original charter term start date? July 2012

If renewal, for how many charter terms has the school been in existence? 1

*** Due to changes in Georgia State law, all charter contracts—including those of conversion charter schools—must be held by a Georgia non-profit corporation.**

Name of the Georgia nonprofit corporation that will hold the charter if granted:

Avondale Education Association

Name of Proposed Charter School: The Museum School of Avondale Estates

Local school system in which charter school will be physically located:

DeKalb County School District

Contact person: Andy Huff _____ Board Chair

Name

Title

Contact address: 923 Forrest Blvd

Decatur, GA 30030

Telephone number of contact: XXXXXXXXXX

E-mail address of contact: andy.huff@themuseumschool.org

Charter School Name: The Museum School of Avondale Estates

Type Locally Approved Start Up (Locally-approved Start-up, State Chartered Special School, Career Academy, Jointly Authorized, Virtual)

Approved by the DeKalb County Board Of Education on _____

Grade Levels Served: K-8

Ages Served 4-14

Proposed Opening/Renewal Date July 2017

Proposed Charter Term July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022 (If this is a renewal petition with a term other than 5 years requested, please give the rationale for the requested term length)

Mission Statement The mission of The Museum School of Avondale Estates is to inspire students, teachers, and the community to collaborate to develop strong critical thinking, interpersonal, and academic skills in our students which will prepare them for real-world success.

For each year of the proposed charter term, please indicate the number of pupils the charter school plans to serve.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Yr 1	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	48					564
Yr 2	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	72					588
Yr 3	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	72					588
Yr 4	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	72					588
Yr 5	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	72					588
Yr 6														
Yr 7														
Yr 8														
Yr 9														
Yr 10														

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e)(2), please complete the following Affidavit. A list of secure and verifiable documents can be found on our website. This form should be completed by the CEO or President of the Non-profit Corporation.

O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e)(2) Affidavit

By executing this affidavit under oath, as an applicant for a charter school contract, as referenced in O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1, from the State Board of Education, the undersigned applicant verifies one of the following with respect to my application for a public benefit:

- 1) X I am a United States citizen.
- 2) _____ I am a legal permanent resident of the United States.
- 3) _____ I am a qualified alien or non-immigrant under the Federal Immigration and Nationality Act with an alien number issued by the Department of Homeland Security or other federal immigration agency.

My alien number issued by the Department of Homeland Security or other federal immigration agency is: _____.

The undersigned applicant also hereby verifies that he or she is 18 years of age or older and has provided at least one secure and verifiable document, as required by O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e)(1), with this affidavit.

The secure and verifiable document provided with this affidavit can best be classified as:

GA Drivers Lic.

In making the above representation under oath, I understand that any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in an affidavit shall be guilty of a violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20, and face criminal penalties as allowed by such criminal statute.

Executed in Acadule City (city), GA (state).

[Signature]

Signature of Applicant

Andrew Heath

Printed Name of Applicant

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN

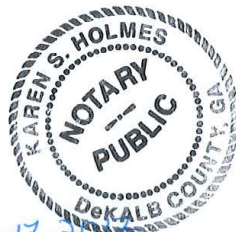
BEFORE ME ON THIS THE

7 DAY OF July, 2016

Karen S. Holmes

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: June 17, 2017



E-mail address of contact: andy.huff@themuseumschool.org

Grade Levels Served: K-8

Ages Served: 4 - 14

Proposed Opening/Renewal Date: August 2017

Proposed Charter Term: July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022

The Petitioner should indicate all grade levels to be served each year during the charter term. For each year of the charter term, please indicate the maximum number of pupils the charter school plans to serve each school year.

Year/Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2017-2018	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	48					564
2018-2019	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	72					588
2019-2020	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	72					588
2020-2021	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	72					588
2021-2022	60	60	60	60	66	66	72	72	72					588

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I. THE CASE

1. Why do you want a charter?

The Museum School seeks a charter to continue its successful implementation of the museum model.

a. What is your motivation for applying to be a charter school?

A charter offers The Museum School the autonomy and flexibility necessary to continue its innovative program. As a charter school, The Museum School is afforded opportunities to push the status quo and traditional programming by researching and pioneering innovative strategies, programs, and initiatives.

b. What will you be able to do with a charter that you cannot do without a charter?

With the broad flexibility waiver granted to charter schools The Museum School will waive policies that inhibit innovation and preclude school-based decisions specific to school needs. Specifically, the school is able to waive personnel and curriculum policies that don't align with our mission or student needs.

c. Describe how parents, community members, and other interested parties were involved in developing the petition and will be involved with the school.

An Avondale Estates parent proposed the creation of a community charter school in July 2008. Public meetings were held at Avondale Estates City Hall. Over 120 individuals and families joined the membership list, including the city's mayor, several city commissioners, and prominent business people. They formed the core of the original initiative and were substantially involved in developing the charter petition. The renewal petition has been developed as a collective effort among the board, staff, parents, and community. The core renewal team was comprised of a group of parents, community members, current and founding board members, and school leaders. Work on the renewal petition began in Fall 2015, and included a close examination of the school's strategic plan, performance on academic, organizational, and financial goals. Completing the renewal petition has been a valuable opportunity to reflect on current performance and future growth. Board and school leadership presented the renewal process to parents and the community at the Spring 2016 State of the School address. The petition was reviewed multiple times at the school's public board meetings. Feedback during this process led to an

additional charter goal. All board-level committee members played an active role in developing the petition.

Parent and community involvement are central to our mission. Key examples of how we maintain involvement from parents, community members and other interested parties are provided below:

Parents/Legal Guardians

The Museum School seeks to form a mutually supportive relationship between students, families, the school, and the community. For this reason, students and their families are expected to contribute to the success of the school. The parent agreement, in the student application (Appendix 46) outlines parent/guardian rights and responsibilities as well as how the school will support the parents in fulfilling these responsibilities. Though the responsibilities have not changed, the number of hours changed in 2013 to reflect a family commitment of 15 hours per child as opposed to the original agreement that was based on number of parents.

98 – 99% of Museum School families annually meet the expectations set forth in the school’s parent agreement. The overall expectations in the current agreement are identical to the expectations set forth in the original agreement. The Museum School’s staff and administrators work closely with families in meeting these expectations, as outlined in the Parent Agreement. These include flexible volunteer opportunities and a written commitment to be creative in helping to find a solution to satisfy parent obligations. In some cases, the number of hours to be served may be altered based on extenuating circumstances. Typically, the principal works with about 10 families per year that have special circumstances preventing them from meeting the full commitment. Unfortunately, if families are far from meeting their hours (> than ½ of the full commitment) and have made no attempt to request extensions, forgiveness, or additional opportunities to serve, their students may become ineligible for after school clubs and programs. Additionally, The Museum School has established a strong Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO provides program ideas, resources, support, and volunteer leadership

training. The Museum School and the PTO have established consistent communication between parents, teachers and administrators.

Governing Board and Board-level Committees

Parents and community members serve on the governing board and on Board-level committees that serve the school, initiate and maintain partnerships with museums and other organizations, and participate in a variety of events and activities that connect students to their community.

School-Based Task Forces and Sub committees

Task forces evaluate and procure a variety of vendors and services. Examples include after school program, school lunch, uniforms, and transportation. Sub-committees focus on broader projects, such as nutrition, student recruitment, and technology, and continue through the school year.

Museum Partners and Extended Community

The museum concept is based on strong community involvement. By design, curriculum and resource partners of The Museum School become an integral part of our school community. They collaborate with our educators on curriculum and provide students with on-site learning expeditions. This approach engages the broader community and the students. At the end of each quarter, our school becomes a museum and invites the community to visit. Our students serve as ambassadors to the community and showcase what they have learned inside and outside the classroom. Neighborhood businesses, local residents, and others are welcomed partners at the school.

i. Describe in detail the community support for this school and the need for this particular school in the community it will serve. Support may be evidenced through additional documentation.

The Museum School of Avondale Estates is a public charter elementary and middle school that opened its doors in 2010. Serving 135 Kindergarten - 3rd grade students in its first year, The Museum School (TMS) currently serves 539 Kindergarten through 8th grade students. As intended by its founders, The Museum School is a true neighborhood school, drawing the majority of its students from its primary attendance zone of Peachcrest and Avondale Elementary School zones. These zones include students residing in zip

codes 30030, 30032, 30033, 30002, 30079, 30317 and 30035. Demographic data demonstrate that the constituency of the Peachcrest and Avondale Elementary School zones is diverse in terms of gender, race and socioeconomic status and similar to that of DeKalb County as a whole. Historical demographic data for the school can be found in Appendix 60.

Museum School students from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds all share the common experience of exploring in an innovative public school setting. The Museum School is unique in Georgia and has an educational model that recognizes that children learn best through personal experience and hands-on discovery. The Museum School offers a choice for families seeking a different model of education. Giving families options ensures that more children will be able to attend a school that meets their needs, and more parents will feel secure in their child's public school education. That security motivates families to invest in the community through home ownership, support of local businesses, and volunteerism. The most direct way to measure community interest is via applications and enrollment. During open enrollment in February 2016, we received 581 applications for 72 positions. Currently, we have a waiting list at every grade level K-7. We have experienced tremendous support from our community. Community members and local businesses have donated their time, talents, and services to enhance the academic program of The Museum School.

ii. As part of your evidence of community engagement, you must provide a letter or a petition signed by parents/guardians of school-age children eligible to attend the charter that demonstrates that they would consider enrolling their child in the proposed school. These items may be placed in the Appendix. The Museum School has a wait list for every grade K-7. See Appendix 23.

iii. Describe the steps you have taken to develop any partnerships and your plans to further develop additional community partnerships.

By design, curriculum and resource partners of The Museum School are a valued and integral part of our school and our community. The Museum School partners with the most outstanding museums and institutions in the region including the Alliance Theatre, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta History

Center, Alliance Theatre Institute for Educators and Teaching Artists, ArtsNow, Georgia Aquarium, Fernbank Museum of Natural History, High Museum, Michael C. Carlos Museum and Zoo Atlanta.

These partners play a vital role in the success of our school by aiding with curriculum mapping, providing students with invaluable resources, and contributing to our school's model of hands-on learning.

Partners collaborate with school educators on curriculum and provide students with educational on-site learning expeditions. The learning expeditions are structured and organized through collaboration between the school and partner, resulting in a meaningful, engaging, and thoughtful learning experience for students. Learning expeditions are, through the work of TMS teachers and partner staff, tailored to the TMS curriculum map and curricular units. Further, The Museum School works with its partners on a variety of projects and programs including grant-writing, piloting new programs and tours, providing feedback on teacher and student resources, and serving as advisors on education committees.

Prior to the school opening, community volunteers studied potential partners, researched their organizations, and wrote profiles on each one. In a series of meetings, the Board and members of the curriculum committee discussed possible partners and generated a prioritized list of institutions to approach. Interested partners from various museums and other organizations were invited to a luncheon on March 26, 2009, during which Board members explained the museum school concept and solicited interest, which laid the foundation for the school's partnership agreements. Now, as we consider partnering with a museum, we engage in conversations about the mutual benefits of a TMS partnership and work towards developing the partnership. As a result of these strong partnerships, Museum School students continue to vastly outperform state and district averages on the Milestones' Assessment, specifically in Science and Social Studies. See Appendix 37.

iv. Provide a list of organizations that have committed to partner with your school and the potential nature of the partnerships. Provide evidence of support from the partners in the Appendix.

See sample partnership agreements in Appendix 30. Partners include: Alliance Theatre, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta History Center, Alliance Theatre Institute for Educators and Teaching Artists, ArtsNow,

Georgia Aquarium, Fernbank Museum of Natural History, High Museum, Michael C. Carlos Museum and Zoo Atlanta.

2. What is the Charter School’s Mission? How does it support the legislative intent of the school’s program to “increase student achievement through academic and organizational innovation?”

The mission of The Museum School is to inspire students, teachers, and the community to collaborate to develop strong critical thinking, interpersonal, and academic skills in our students, which will prepare them for real-world success. The Museum School offers the accessibility of a public school with the organizational and curricular innovation of a museum school model. Thus, beginning at the neighborhood level, students develop a strong sense of community, independence, responsibility, and respect for the impact of their decisions and actions on others. These skills inspire them with the confidence to identify and manage problems at the local and global level. As a result of the school’s academic and organizational innovations coupled with our autonomy as a charter school, The Museum School’s student achievement scores are consistently high. The Museum School has “beat the odds” annually based on the state’s rigorous metric. The Museum School’s CCRPI scores are significantly higher than state and district averages. MAP data, as compared to the national norm, reflects significant student achievement with 68 – 78 % of students growing at a faster rate than their peers.

a. Please provide specific examples of and documentation regarding programs that would be offered by your school that are not offered in any existing schools in DCSD.

Our academic program implements the museum school model, in which we partner with museums to achieve high academic standards by creating inquiry-based, collaborative learning units. Instruction is focused on each student’s individual learning style, readiness, and prior understandings and experiences. This teaching model allows all of our students to move beyond basic proficiency and toward academic excellence. Our year is organized so that teachers have mandatory professional development to ensure they have the tools to provide differentiated instruction. Operating as a charter school allows us to implement this unique but proven model that is aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence and is

not available in any other Georgia public school. As detailed in Section II, museum learning leads to a deeper understanding of material and higher student achievement.

II. ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

3. What are your school's performance objectives for the proposed charter term?

Goal 1: During each year of its five-year charter term, the Charter School shall “beat the odds” as determined by a formula measuring expected student growth.

The Museum School met this goal each year, as applicable, of its previous 5-year charter.

See Appendix 34.

Goal 2: The Charter School will demonstrate proficiency on the CCRPI.

The Museum School met this goal each year, as applicable, of its previous 5-year charter.

See Appendix 35.

A. Measure 1: The Charter School's CCRPI score shall be better than both the State and local district in each year of the charter contract.

B. Measure 2: During each year of the charter term, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the grade-level specific Lexile measure, an indicator of Post Elementary School Readiness as measured through CCRPI, will be better than both the State and local district in each year of the charter contract.

Goal 3: Each year, by subject and grade level, the Charter School will exhibit growth on a national norm-referenced test.

The Museum School met this goal each year of its previous 5-year charter. See Appendix 36.

A. Measure 1: For each year of the five-year charter term, 65% of all students in grades K-8 will meet or exceed their RIT growth learning projections, as developed by NWEA.

Goal 4: Student achievement will meet or exceed DeKalb County School District and state of Georgia student achievement averages.

The Museum School met a similar, CRCT-based goal, each year of its previous 5-year charter. See Appendix 37.

A. Measure 1: The Charter School's percentages of Level 3 and 4 scores on the Milestones shall exceed state and local averages in each year of the charter contract.

Goal 5: In each year of the charter term, the overall percentage of students scoring Level 1 or 2 on the Georgia Milestones assessment will decrease by 2% from the previous year.

4. How will the charter school governing board, management, instructional leadership, faculty and staff know that students are on track to meet these academic goals?

We engage in rigorous assessment of students to drive curriculum and supplementary programming.

Additional detail is provided in sections 4a – 4j below.

a. What assessments will the school administer to obtain performance data for each student?

Assessment instruments include norm-referenced tests such as Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), criterion-referenced tests (Milestones), and limited performance-based measures (GKIDS). MAP is administered 3 times each school year, with the August assessment serving as baseline data. Diagnostic reading assessments, such as Developmental Reading Assessments and Fountas and Pinnell, are administered two - three times per year to gauge students' reading levels. We participate in all required EL, Gifted, Special Education, EIP/REP testing for the purposes of screening, monitoring, and eligibility. The Museum School will follow DCSD testing guidelines for state-mandated assessments.

Georgia Milestones Assessment

The Georgia Milestones Assessment is administered in grades 3-8 according to Georgia DOE guidance. The action plan that is created as a result of the analysis of Milestones data is shared with the appropriate Board committees and used to guide the creation of school-wide instructional goals for the upcoming year. 2015 Milestones results are included in Appendix 37.

MAP (Site-Specific NRT)

The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is a nationally recognized norm-referenced test developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association. MAP is used in grades K-1 in reading and mathematics and for grades 2-8 in reading, language arts, and mathematics. This computerized, adaptive test assesses the level

at which students are performing, using the chronological age of the student as a starting point. Each test individualizes for the student being assessed. MAP data are included in Appendix 36.

Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)

The Georgia Alternate Assessment will be administered to students whose IEPs require such an option under the guidance of state and federal regulations. Teachers will comply with GAA guidelines under the supervision of the Special Education teacher to compile student portfolios for the GAA.

GKIDS Assessment

The GKIDS (Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills) assessment is administered to all students enrolled in Kindergarten at The Museum School.

ACCESS for ELLs

ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is an English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 8th graders who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs).

Formative Assessment

Formative assessments are standards-aligned periodic assessments administered throughout units of study to assess concept mastery of each student. Assessments are designed by the instructional staff utilizing assessment best practices and are backward-mapped from unit objectives and the Georgia Standards of Excellence for the appropriate grade level. The Formative Assessment data is regularly compared with MAP and Milestones data to ensure assessments are accurately identifying growth goals.

Diagnostic Assessment

Literacy assessment is conducted using tools such as running records, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and/or the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Diagnostic reading assessments are one on one reading conferences where children read aloud from a specifically selected text. Diagnostic assessments are given two - three times per year and individual student results are tracked from year to year.

Authentic Assessment

Through authentic assessments, teachers assess students as they perform real-world tasks, demonstrating meaningful application of content and skills. Instructional staff members use authentic assessments regularly to assess student progress. Assessments range in frequency from daily (journals) to quarterly (museum exhibits). Authentic assessments include but are not limited to the following:

Travel Journal Assessment

Travel journal portfolios are established and maintained for all students. Travel journals are created during each learning module and provide a place for students to question, record information, and reflect on learning expeditions. The journals are assessed by the teacher throughout each learning module for evidence of student understanding and mastery of GSE.

Performance Assessment/Exhibit Night

Student performance is evaluated based on pre-established criteria that have been reviewed with students. Exhibit night performances may include oral presentation, conducting an experiment, or teaching a skill or concept to other members of the class, school, and/or community.

Portfolios

A systematic collection of student work over a period of time that exhibits students' work and progress is gathered. Portfolios are used to measure students' progress towards statewide standards using school-wide rubrics.

b. Describe how the school will obtain baseline achievement data.

Each fall, *all* K-8 students will take the MAP assessment in the areas of reading and math, plus language usage in grades 2-8. In the fall, teachers of 4th – 8th grade students will have the opportunity to review Milestones scores from the previous spring. Through careful analysis, teachers will identify specific domains of strength and growth for students in the areas of ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. As a result, teachers will use this data as they finalize planning, pacing, and grouping. Diagnostic reading assessments provide teachers with a reading level baseline.

c. Describe how the school will benchmark student growth.

Baseline data is collected at the beginning of the school year or at the time of a student's registration.

Data includes report cards, standardized testing (i.e. norm-referenced tests and/or Milestones data if available), qualitative data from staff, and Special Education documentation, if applicable. To assess gains made over a period of time, individual student's scores on the Milestones, DRA and MAP are tracked beginning with Year 1 scores. This data allows the school and board to look at trends over a long range of time, which will influence instructional, curricular, and staffing choices.

At the student level, individual assessment results are distributed to families as soon as they are received. The reports include current overall scores and more specific areas of strength and challenge, for example, domain or strand scores. In addition, the reports offer information related to individual student growth over the current school year and as evidenced over the previous school years.

At the school level, a variety of reports and presentations are provided to the school, with grade- and classroom-specific data. For example, a report on MAP data is created specifically for each grade level, allowing faculty to evaluate student growth. The school monitors trend and cohort data annually through a data carousel protocol, involving all instructional staff members. See Appendix 58.

The school conducts training sessions on utilization of annual test results with staff members throughout the year. Data releases are prepared to share with Board members and the broader community. Releases are first presented to the Board and then released generally to the public through press and website.

d. Describe plans to formally and informally assess student performance in the core academic areas.

MAP is administered to all K-8 students three times during the school year, August, December and April.

The data collected from these assessments provides teachers with information, specific to individual students, on areas of strength and growth, aligned directly to reading, math, and language usage domains and strands. The Milestones Assessment, administered to 3rd – 8th grade students each spring, provides staff, students, and parents with an overall outlook as to students' level of understanding and mastery of state standards. The Milestones assesses students in all subject areas – ELA, Math, Social Studies, and

Science. This formal assessment provides the school with valuable data that impacts individual student learning plans and goals and school wide curricular programs.

Informal assessments within the core academic areas take place frequently at The Museum School. These assessments are evident through a variety of forms and mediums. Pre-post assessments, weekly check-ins (i.e. Friday 5's), and exit tickets are implemented in each classroom throughout the school. This varied approach to informal assessments allows the teachers to do quick check-ins frequently to evaluate students' mastery of the current skill in addition to "previewing" students' understanding of future skills and concepts. This system assists teachers as they plan weekly and daily lessons that truly align with students' needs. The formative and summative assessments are administered in all core subject areas.

e. Explain how the charter school will work with the local school system to participate in all state-mandated assessments.

As required by the state, The Museum School participates in the Milestones, GKIDS, and ACCESS for English Language Learners. The Museum School complies with all requirements of the Single Statewide Accountability System. The school has designated a School Testing Coordinator who attends all county-level trainings and workshops to ensure accurate school testing procedures and school-based training. The School Testing Coordinator trains staff and monitors the administration of these assessments. This coordinator and others administering the test use established guidance in administering assessments (including the State Assessments Handbook and State Accommodations Manual). The School Testing Coordinator will continue to work with the DeKalb County School District liaison(s) to ensure that materials are disseminated and collected from The Museum School in the same secure manner as for all DeKalb County schools. The School Testing Coordinator and Principal are responsible for test storage and security once the tests are distributed to The Museum School. Certified personnel (teachers, counselors, administrators) administer all state assessments. The Museum School will adopt the same testing schedule as DeKalb County School District. The Museum School plans for test and assessment costs by including an assessment line item in its annual budget.

f. Describe plans to diagnose educational strengths and needs of students and plans on how this data will be used for instructional planning.

The school's implementation of MAP and formative assessments allows teachers and staff to diagnose educational strengths and needs of students and to plan appropriate instructional opportunities for students. Each summer, the school conducts a Data Carousel protocol involving all certified staff members. Achievement, growth, attendance, and parent/student survey data is displayed in a carousel format. Staff members rotate individually or in small groups, analyzing the data, noting patterns and trends, and making general and specific data-based observations. After the rotations, teachers work in small group and large group settings to identify trends and patterns and then apply these findings to the new school year's school improvement plan.

The school's administrative team, including its Instructional Support teacher, is extremely active in diagnosing strengths and needs of students and supporting teachers with relevant instructional planning. The Instructional Support teacher in particular supports teachers throughout the school year in identifying student needs and adjusting instruction, as appropriate.

MAP is aligned with the common core standards and provides teachers with reports outlining school, class, and most importantly, student areas of strength and growth. MAP is administered three times per year and is followed by deliberate analysis and targeted instruction. Fall MAP reports are discussed at the school level at the board's Academic Excellence Meeting and the school's Data Committee Meeting.

Overall trends and patterns are identified and discussed and become learning topics at future data and leadership committee meetings. Fall MAP reports are discussed at grade levels as teachers analyze the data through student data protocols, assessment spreadsheets, data binders, and work sample reviews. At this level, teachers are identifying grade-level areas of strength and growth and then altering weekly instructional plans to address these specific areas. Teachers create assessment spreadsheets comparing student performance on MAP to performance on other assessments.

Winter MAP data tends to be the most impactful and influential of the three MAP administrations. As a

result, the data is again analyzed at the school level (involving the Academic Excellence Committee and Data Committee), the grade level, and the class/individual level. Analysis at these levels helps teachers and staff identify those strategies and interventions from the 1st semester that worked, as evidenced by Winter MAP data trends, and those strategies and interventions that need to be modified in order to better meet students' needs. Formative assessments throughout each learning unit also provide teachers with an excellent opportunity to collect and analyze current data, leading to adapted instruction and planning aligned to student needs. These frequent, yet simple and brief, assessments allow teachers to keep a constant gauge on student understanding and areas of need. As a result, teachers can plan for immediate re-teaching or remediation or enrichment and curriculum compacting.

g. Describe the school's plan for using assessment data to monitor and improve achievement for all students over a set period of time.

All students will be administered the MAP assessment within 6 weeks of enrollment, or within the next testing window, in order to provide teachers and parents with baseline data. MAP data allow the school to identify skills and concepts that individual students have learned and diagnose instructional needs.

Because the test dynamically adjusts to a student's performance level, it can be utilized to monitor academic growth over time and make instructional decisions at the individual, classroom and school level. MAP is administered three times per year and is aligned to national content standards. Scores are reported as norm-referenced, achievement and growth, providing different perspectives on an individual student's learning. The ability to administer the assessment several times per year allows for close monitoring of the progress of individual students. MAP results are maintained test after test, so teachers and parents can measure progress year after year.

Students are evaluated on a continuous basis by teachers and staff in all areas of instruction, including math, language arts, foreign language, science and social studies. Pre-and post-assessments, along with other frequent formative assessments, are regularly administered. These assessments allow teachers to track individual and group progress towards grade level goals throughout the year. The assessment plan

enables teachers to differentiate instruction, address specific needs and monitor growth.

The purpose behind all student assessment is to show faculty how to improve instruction and achievement for all students. The principal and senior staff members assist teachers to disaggregate data and analyze assessment results to see students' areas of strengths and weaknesses. The faculty interpret the scores and find the most effective ways to address areas of low performance.

Assessment data is used to provide information for the following purposes: To identify strengths and weaknesses in skill development, individualize instruction, diagnose strength and weaknesses of groups, revise/select curriculum materials, revise/select methods of instruction, counsel students, assist in placement of students in special programs, determine revisions needed in the curriculum and issue progress to parent(s)/guardian(s)/stakeholders. The assessment system provides data to stakeholders at the Board, school, and classroom levels for decision-making. Board members are provided ongoing information on key indicators through annual reports from the principal, as well as periodic reports from the principal and senior staff members.

All classroom teachers meet with the Principal individually each fall to review baseline data and discuss instructional strategies and interventions as a result of this data. These meetings are designed to focus on individual student needs and instructional planning but also provide the principal with a glimpse of class, grade-level and school wide trends and patterns.

h. Describe how the charter school shall comply with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-41 and federal accountability requirements.

The Museum School complies with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-41 and federal accountability requirements. Specifically, The Museum School follows the statewide K-8 accountability assessment program to ensure school accountability for goals of improved student achievement. The Museum School complies with the levels of performance defined on each assessment instrument. The Museum School includes all related data in its annual report.

Through MAP testing, The Museum School has access to nationally comparative results, allowing the

school to compare its results to the results of a national norm of over 5 million peers and utilize those results to further increase student achievement. The Museum School reviews disaggregated data related to student achievement, attendance, length of intervention periods, and other relevant topics and areas. The school's performance on these indicators is compared to the performance of the state and local district. Further, The Museum School thoroughly reviews and analyzes its annual CCRPI score.

The Museum School participates in State-led on-site audits as described in O.C.G.A. 20-14-35. If the school is a recipient of an award through the Office of Student Achievement, the school agrees to comply with all award guidelines and requirements. The Museum School agrees to maintain the confidentiality of identifiable individual student performance data.

i. Describe how the charter will adhere to all assessment guidelines and procedures as outlined by the State Assessment Handbook, the State Accommodations Manual and other state and local guidance on assessment.

The Museum School adheres to and complies with all requirements, guidelines, processes, and procedures outlined in the State handbooks and manuals, in addition to the local assessment guidance. All participating staff members are trained as required, security measures are met and expectations exceeded, and all guidelines are implemented with precision.

j. Describe how staff from the charter school will attend required test administration training held by DCSD.

Applicable Museum School staff members attend all required test administration trainings held by DCSD. The School Testing Coordinator organizes and facilitates a smooth testing environment and process throughout the school year. The School Testing Coordinator attends all DCSD test administration trainings, including but not limited to Milestones, GKIDS, and ACCESS. As applicable and as requested by the district, additional staff members may also attend the trainings. For example, the school's EL teacher may accompany the testing coordinator to the ACCESS training. The Museum School will make necessary accommodations to ensure all relevant staff members attend required trainings including

offering coverage, substitutes, and opportunities to redeliver the information to other relevant staff members. The Museum School carefully plans for test training dates to ensure appropriate documentation is prepared prior to the training and applicable staff members are prepared.

5. What specific actions will the school’s management, instructional leadership, faculty and staff take to ensure student performance objectives are met during the proposed charter term?

The school implements research-based curricular programs and strategies to ensure that student performance objectives are consistently met. The Museum School uses assessment to make data-driven decisions about instruction and to improve teaching and individual learning. Variable methods of measurement provide an opportunity to discover how each student learns best and to adjust instruction accordingly. Individual teachers analyze assessment data at a class/individual student level. Additionally, teachers meet one-on-one with the school’s principal to discuss class and individual school data. This in-depth data meeting kicks starts additional focused instruction and planning. School-level goals and progress are shared with the board level Academic Excellence Committee and full Board quarterly.

a. Describe the focus of the curriculum. This statement should also discuss any distinctive or unique instructional methods to be used that are research-based and standards driven.

Within the context of the museum school model, the following curricular foci have proven successful (see Appendix 56 for achievement data) and will continue to be implemented:

Curriculum is organized into 9-week thematic units across Social Studies and Science in grades K-5 and across all content areas in grades 6-8. Integrating a common theme across content areas enables students to see relationships between content areas and internalize key concepts.

The core values of The Museum School are: Responsibility, Respect, Sustainability, Cooperation, Creativity, and Kindness, which we emphasize in our curriculum. Our curriculum is not only based on research-based practices and state standards but also these core values. Each core value is integrated into the curriculum of the school not just as separate character education objectives, but as lenses integral to the examination of all content matter.

The Museum School has adopted an educational model focused on acknowledging a diverse array of learning styles while acquiring knowledge from a variety of experiences and people. Through this model, students make visits to museums and institutions that provide them with extraordinary opportunities to gain knowledge of diverse histories, philosophies and cultures. The museum model has contributed to students' greater understanding of state standards and more importantly, has helped students to think more critically and creatively. As evidenced by MAP and Milestones data, see Appendices 36 and 37, a vast majority of Museum School students, as a result of the model's hands-on approach, not only exceed state standards but also grow at a faster rate than over 10 million peers nationwide. The engaging and interactive museum model has led The Museum School to "beat the odds" annually, see Appendix 34, performing at a higher rate and with more success than schools similar to it.

The Governing Board of The Museum School believes that significant theory, research, and evidence support the premise that the curriculum and delivery model described above will continue to produce exceptional results. Specifically, we look to "Multiple Intelligence" theory, constructivist theory, and the demonstrated success of Normal Park Museum Magnet School (Chattanooga, TN) as examples supporting the effectiveness of The Museum School model.

The Museum School concept draws heavily on constructivism, a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on experiences, individuals construct their own understanding of the world. They generate their own rules and mental models that are used to make sense of their experiences. Constructivism calls for a de-emphasis of standardized instruction, but not the elimination of learning standards. It promotes using standards-based curricula customized to the students' prior knowledge. Under the theory of constructivism, instructors tailor their teaching strategies to student responses and encourage students to analyze, interpret, and predict information. Students' interests are explored, and lesson plans are drawn that encourage those interests. Students have access to primary sources, which provides them with a more direct experience upon which to construct their developing knowledge. By taking part in judging their own progress through reflection and self-assessment, students at The Museum

School develop a sense of responsibility for and ownership of their own learning.

The Museum School will follow all county and state requirements regarding the incorporation of the Georgia Standards of Excellence into the school's curriculum. The Museum School's instructional staff participates in training and staff development opportunities annually to ensure a full understanding of the state standards.

b. A full and complete curriculum, aligned, for all grade levels to be served during the proposed charter term is required to be submitted as an Appendix item. This information must be aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence and Georgia Performance Standards (where applicable).

See Appendix 11.

c. Identify materials/programs that the school plans to obtain/purchase to support the stated curriculum.

Reader's Workshop

The Museum School will incorporate a variety of materials and programs aligned directly with the Reader's Workshop Model. Lucy Calkins' Units of Study for Teaching Reading K-5 will serve as the school's primary reading program. This Units of Study program includes research-based tools and methods specifically developed to help readers build text complexity and foundational reading skills. Pearson's Good Habits Great Readers will serve as a supplementary program to the Calkins units. This series is based on leveled books and guided reading programming. As a result, the series includes an outstanding number of leveled books aimed at K-8 learners.

Words their Way 2 kits along with Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment kits will be purchased allowing teachers to regularly administer diagnostic reading assessments. These in-class assessments provide teachers with up-to-date information related to students' individual reading levels and overall reading growth and progress. Teachers use this data to tailor future reading instruction, including small group learning targets, individual reading goals, and mini-lesson topics.

Writer's Workshop

The Museum School will incorporate Lucy Calkins' Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing, K-8 program. This series offers grade-level specific plans for teaching state-of-the-art writing workshops that help students meet and exceed standards. The Units of Study program is designed to support writing workshop and includes tools and strategies for teaching opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing.

Math Workshop

To effectively implement Math Workshop, The Museum School will purchase math manipulatives, games, and partner games for students to use and explore during math rotations. Students will also use apps and programs on laptops/iPads, including IXL Math, Moby Max, and XtraMath, as detailed below.

Pre-AP ELA and Math

The Museum School has purchased College Board's Springboard ELA and Math Programs for grades 6-8. The programs are fully aligned to college and career readiness standards and provide students with a springboard to AP classes in high school.

Handwriting Without Tears

The Museum School has purchased Handwriting Without Tears materials for Kindergarten – 3rd graders. This handwriting program is correlated to Common Core Standards and offers students an easy-to-learn program designed to improve fine motor skills, creative writing skills and overall handwriting mastery.

Technology Licenses

The Museum School will continue to subscribe to the following software, license-based technology programs: Brain Pop Jr., Brain Pop, IXL Math and Language, RAZ Kids, and Accelerated Reader. These varied programs present concepts and skills across the disciplines in an engaging, interesting format. Each of these programs supports the school's hands-on, real world approach to learning.

d. Describe the educational innovations that will be implemented.

The staff members of The Museum School are committed to promoting deep understanding of curricular

materials in our students. We accomplish this through the use of research-proven instructional methods, including differentiated instruction and inquiry-based, collaborative, real-life, active learning. Our instructional methods are student-centered, individualized, and project-based in order to create learners who are creators and participants (not just passive receivers) of human knowledge and art-making.

The Museum School's Pedagogy

Initially, our museum pedagogy focuses the curriculum through themes in science and social studies, expanding these to interdisciplinary units as students' grade, interests, and skills warrant. Students explore four (4) themes each academic year, each in a 9-week block. At the beginning of each quarter, the theme is introduced and students begin their individual "travel journals." They begin by developing a list of essential questions about the theme to be studied, often beginning their questions with "I wonder..." Each thematic unit is prepared by the grade level teachers, together with museum educators from the relevant museum partners, using the Understanding by Design (UbD) process. The content of each unit is driven by the Georgia Standards of Excellence and aligned accordingly. By working backwards from the exhibit to be created at the end of the unit, teachers ensure that essential questions are explored and that the applicable performance standards have been thoroughly addressed.

Approximately every other week, students travel to a partner museum to explore select artifacts directly related to their studies. Teachers lead a seminar-style discussion at the museum. Students reflect on their learning in their travel journals through a variety of methods including drawings, poetry, fiction/nonfiction writing and more.

At the end of each unit, students in each grade collaborate to produce an exhibit that demonstrates what they have learned. These exhibits include museum pieces as well as written placards to describe them. They also include scientific experiments or dramatic representations of the subject material. Quarterly, the school actually becomes an exhibit hall, inviting the community in to view the student-created exhibits. Students act as docents, teaching parents and other community members about what they have learned.

Inquiry-Based and Experiential Learning: The Museum School Model

From Lauren Resnick's core tenets of teaching and learning to William Sedlacek's noncognitive variables, experiential learning is proven in education research and practice to be the best way to reach all modalities of learners and is integral to the development of critical thinking skills. The museum model enables the integration of experiential learning into instructional delivery, practice, and assessment.

The Museum School does not see museums as places with static exhibits where learning is passive; rather, we regard them as places for learning, exploration, activity, imagination, and creativity. Successful museum schools collaborate with the museum to develop a curriculum, plan for teacher development, and create an environment where both parties prosper from the relationship.

The school's faculty works to create interdisciplinary themes and units that guide learning expeditions into museum environments. The Museum School partners with local museums and institutions to develop creative, readiness-appropriate unit and lesson plans that incorporate specific objectives, assessments, and learning activities. Curricular partners are referenced in question 1, part 4.

Students visit the institutions to address specific inquiries they have developed. They then explore and investigate the material, often in a hands-on manner, but always with direct, personal experience. Finally, students analyze and reflect on their investigations to form a new understanding of the material. This understanding is then shared with the community in the form of a museum exhibit for all to experience.

Community Service Learning

Each grade-level designs one unit per academic year in which students share their learning with stakeholders in the community. From 1st grade field guides at Zoo Atlanta to student-designed 7th grade expeditions at the Georgia Aquarium, Museum School students continue to impact the greater community. The Museum School recently expanded their relationship with Avondale Elementary School through an economic standards-based garden project. 3rd grade students from both schools collaborated to plant new items in the garden, aiming towards harvesting and selling the goods. The Museum School looks forward to continuing this tradition through many years.

Workshop Strategies For Literacy Building

The Museum School uses guided reading to teach literacy, engaging small groups of students in tailored fluency and comprehension activities. Reader's Workshop teaches literacy through both independent reading and small group guided reading. Students advance at their own pace using a system of leveled texts and individualized lessons geared to student reading ability. They are encouraged to choose books at their individual reading level, thus taking responsibility for the learning process. Small groups of four to six children work on different activities based on need, strengths, or preferences and group membership is fluid. Writer's Workshop is a second component of a balanced literacy program that assures that writing is a daily activity, beginning in Kindergarten. Fluency is built through continuous, repeated exposure to the writing process. The format includes story planning, revision, teacher editing, and instruction in the mechanics of grammar. Students write about their own experiences, resulting in increased creativity and motivation.

Workshop-Based Math

The math curriculum will be presented in a workshop format similar to Reader's and Writer's Workshop. Math Workshop/Guided Math is a structure for teaching where the teacher supports each child's development of math proficiency through the context of a small group. Working with children in small groups provides powerful possibilities for reaching all levels. Students engage in learning opportunities where the teacher focuses on a particular concept, strategy, or skill, allowing teachers to re-teach, reinforce, and/or expand. Differentiation is achieved as students are in different groups and instruction is geared towards the individual needs of the student so they can learn exactly what they need to know at their instructional level. Groups are changed weekly as the standards change. Math Workshop/Guided Math combines proven best practices as reported by Marilyn Burns, Robert Marzano, and Carol Tomlinson by incorporating hands-on teaching, problem-solving, differentiation, and opportunities for practice.

Instructional Use of Technology

Students and staff have access to a variety of technology, including iPads, laptops, and electronic whiteboards. These tools impact instruction by offering material to students in an engaging, interactive format.

The Museum School recognizes technology as an area of growth and has created a Technology Committee to review and edit the school's technology strategic plan. The plan will align with the school's mission and goals as well as the technology standards outlined by AdvanceEd. Developing a comprehensive technology plan was noted as an improvement priority in the AdvancEd Exit Report (see Appendix 28) following The Museum School's successful accreditation visit in January 2015. Effective, productive student-based and teacher-based technologies that are directly aligned with increased student achievement are of critical importance to The Museum School.

Positive School Culture

Teachers at The Museum School help create a positive learning environment as they model the habits that will be instilled in students, including respect for and celebration of each member of the community, personal responsibility for the school, the materials, and the classrooms, and willingness to contribute wholeheartedly to the success of the school. To further enhance the classroom environment, The Museum School works to maintain high levels of family and community involvement to further recognize the achievements of students.

Positive school culture is evident in numerous programs and initiatives at The Museum School. All 6th-8th grade middle school students are members of a gender-based advisory group. These groups meet twice a week and cover a range of topics including college and career readiness, friendship, bullying, and social issues. All K-8 students participate in monthly village meetings where grade-levels come together to celebrate individual, class, and school accomplishments. K-8 homerooms are paired up with "buddies" for activities and programs including Read Across America, Student Publishing Days, and partner reading.

Implementation of Marzano’s Research-Based Strategies School-wide

In 2001, Robert Marzano (with Pickering and Pollock) published a meta-analysis of research accumulated over thirty years in the seminal work *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. From literally thousands of comparisons, nine categories of instructional strategies were identified that were proven to be effective. These “best practices” inform the following activities that The Museum School students engage in: 1) Identifying Similarities and Differences, 2) Summarizing and Note-Taking, 3) Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition, 4) Homework and Practice, 5) Nonlinguistic Representations, 6) Learning Groups, 7) Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback, 8) Generating and Testing Hypotheses , 9) Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers

Differentiated Instruction

Another benefit of museum- or project-based learning is that it can be easily adapted to individual learners, not only by the teachers but also by the students themselves, teaching them both leadership and collaboration skills. Carol Tomlinson (2000) notes that students learn in a variety of ways and have differing interests, so the best school instruction is fitted to a diverse student population through the process of differentiation. The teacher using museum pedagogy adapts the instruction to students’ readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

Professional Development

The Museum School recognizes the crucial role effective teachers play in delivering quality instruction and raising student achievement. In-depth sessions held during summer months ensure that all faculty are familiar and comfortable with the school’s unique curriculum, philosophy, instructional methods, and discipline policies. Professional development is also scheduled during the school year and is based on staff needs as determined by observations and conferences. Teachers are also given opportunities to select options that pertain to their grade, as well as content areas.

The Museum School offers relevant and meaningful professional development opportunities to all staff members. Front office staff, assistants, administrators, support staff, and certified teachers all have the

opportunity to participate in on- and off-campus PD workshops, trainings, and conferences. Staff members redeliver content and material as appropriate following these sessions. Monthly Professional Learning Communities, based on teachers' TKES identified areas of growth, are extremely valuable as teachers collaborate to develop skills and strategies in specific, relevant areas of growth.

e. Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase student achievement.

Though the Museum School's innovations vary in type, audience, and implementation, they all directly impact student achievement, as evidenced by the school's academic success during its first charter term. Innovational instructional practices like the workshop model, Marazano's Research-Based Strategies and the museum model directly increase student achievement. The innovations also impact student achievement indirectly through programs like professional development for teachers and staff. Positive school culture greatly impacts student achievement as evidenced through the implementation of these innovations: positive behavior support, integration of core values, and modeling of core values. Please see additional chart in Appendix 59.

f. Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique school.

The innovations described are ideal for The Museum School's hands-on, real world learning model. The experiential learning, inquiry-based model aligns well with the academic and behavior innovations. The methods above have proven successful and direct drivers of increased student achievement.

g. Describe the anticipated teacher-to-student ratios and the rationale for maintaining these ratios.

Small class size is crucial to the school's successful integration of a differentiated model. Class sizes and ratios, detailed below, are our maximum. The Museum School will utilize wait lists to ensure full capacity. The school is very familiar with the state's Class Size Rule 160-5-1-.08 and strives to stay below state mandated ratios. Class size ratios are as followed with the school's goal being to work towards a full-time assistant in each classroom.

Kindergarten – 3rd grade 1:20, not to exceed 20/class

4th - 5th 1:22, not to exceed 22/class

6th – 8th 1:24, not to exceed 24/class

With the addition of certified staff in related arts (music, physical education, foreign language, art) and special education, the overall student ratio will be approximately 1 teacher to 15 students.

Extenuating circumstances, such as retentions, enrollment of multiples, and mid-year grade promotion, may impact the maximum number of students per class.

h. If this is a charter high school, describe how the charter high school will determine that a student has satisfied the requirements for high school graduation.

The Museum School will not serve high school students.

6. What are the school's plans for educating special populations?

The Museum School will partner with DeKalb County Schools to provide services as needed. DCSD and school personnel collaborate to ensure the identification, eligibility and services of students with IEPs are 100% compliant. DCSD provides the school with services in the areas of Speech Language, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and School Psychology/Evaluation. Special populations will be served in the least restrictive environment. Special education, EIP, and EL programs at The Museum School are specifically based on inclusive practices. Highly effective, certified teachers will be hired to ensure a high quality education for each of the students. Teachers and related staff will participate in applicable training and professional development. The Museum School will comply with all local, state, and federal laws and guidelines in serving special populations of students including gifted, EL, SST and 504. The Museum School will seek guidance from and support from DCSD in federal areas.

7. Describe methods, strategies and/or programs for meeting the needs of students identified as gifted and talented. Include any diagnostic methods or instruments that will be used to identify and assess those students.

The Museum School specifically meets the needs of identified gifted learners and high achievers in compliance with state law and regulations. After appropriate identification and assessment measures, teachers who hold gifted endorsement on their certificate will serve identified gifted learners the

equivalent of five segments a week. Gifted education is provided through approved delivery models, including resource classes taught by gifted specialists, cluster grouping, advanced content classes, and collaborative instruction and planning with gifted specialists, classroom teachers, and museum personnel. Curriculum for gifted students will include advanced-content classes. The Museum School uses several diagnostic instruments to identify gifted learners. The initial screening process begins with scores from the norm-referenced MAP. Following this screening, The Museum School assesses all referred students using the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT). The school uses the Gifted Rating Scales to assess motivation. Occasionally, secondary assessments are administered in the area of mental ability. These tests include the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT), Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, and Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). The Museum School's comprehensive gifted program from screening to eligibility to servicing will continue to be fully compliant with state and federal mandates.

8. Describe how the charter school will provide state and federally mandated services for students with disabilities. Include any diagnostic methods or instruments that will be used to identify and assess those students.

The provision of services and due process procedures will be implemented for students with disabilities in accordance with all relevant Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations.

The Museum School is open to all students in kindergarten through 8th grade who live in the boundaries of the attendance zone. The Museum School complies with all special education requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title 11 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in addition to Georgia State Policy. Students with disabilities will be entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) provided at no cost to the parents, determined on an individual, case by case basis.

Evaluation and Identification of Students with Disabilities

The Museum School has developed a Student Support Team (SST) to identify and plan alternative

instructional strategies for students experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties. The Student Support Team includes teachers, parents, administrators, the school counselor, school psychologist and special education personnel. Student Support Team intervention begins in the classroom with standards-based instruction and research-based interventions specifically designed to meet each child's needs. The Student Support Team follows a problem-solving framework to address students with academic and behavioral difficulties that do not respond to whole class/small group strategies.

The evaluation and placement of students in Special Education programming complies with federal and state regulations and is initiated immediately following referral from an appropriate staff member. An initial parent conference is conducted to inform parents of the reason for the referral, procedures that will be used in the evaluation, and the rights and responsibilities of the parent.

Parents will receive a copy of "Procedural Safeguards" upon initial evaluation, at each subsequent IEP meeting, upon re-evaluation, upon receipt of a request for mediation or due process hearing, and/or when a change in the student's designation occurs. A licensed vendor will evaluate students or on-site, licensed professional and subsequent recommendations will be immediately implemented. Any student who is designated as a student with exceptionalities will have an initial IEP meeting and begin services with the Special Education teacher to ensure IEP compliance and monitor student progress.

Development, Review and Revision of IEP's

IEP's are developed by a team according to federal and state regulations. The IEP includes annual goals, necessary related services and environments, supports, accommodations and parameters for participation in state and local assessments. IEP meetings, which include one of the student's general education teachers, parents, the Special Education teacher, relevant service providers, and an administrator, are held based on the IEP's re-evaluate and review dates, as new developments in a student's IEP require, and as needed based on classroom performance. An interpreter will be provided at no cost to families whose home language is not English. The IEP is closely monitored by the Special Education teacher and implemented by all staff members. Professional Development and ongoing support from the Special

Education teacher facilitates the involvement of all instructional staff in the progress tracking of all Special Education students.

The Special Education teacher and School Psychologist review student records in advance of the school year and convenes the IEP team as needed to plan necessary services for the coming year.

Integration of Special Education

The Museum School has a strong emphasis on early identification and intervention for learning and behavioral differences. All efforts are made to serve exceptional students in the regular classroom to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with the least restrictive environment (LRE) guidelines mandated by federal law. The special education program seamlessly integrates into the general education classroom. Frequent, ongoing professional development and support for all instructional staff includes special education strategies and modifications. Services are provided according to an IEP developed by a team of professionals and parents who determine eligibility based on an evaluation by a qualified school psychologist as well as teacher input and observations.

Delivery of Special Education and Related Services

The Museum School provides services to special education students according to their Individualized Education Plans (IEP). All procedural safeguards are met in terms of parental consent, and qualified school personnel will provide services. Services and due process procedures are provided for students with disabilities in accordance with all relevant Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations.

Facility

The designated facility and all proposed modifications to the site complies with the ADA and Section 504, as well as any other related laws.

Discipline of Students with Exceptionalities

The Museum School will continue to comply with all special education laws and regulations. Students with disabilities will be entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) provided at no cost to the parents, determined on an individual, case-by-case basis. The Museum School will continue to handle

all discipline issues in accordance with Federal regulations and State guidelines.

The school-wide guiding principle for discipline is Responsive Classroom. Responsive Classroom has been demonstrated to reduce the amount of instructional time missed for disciplinary proceedings. IEP's and federal and state regulations guide all disciplinary action. Students receiving Special Education services will be provided with the appropriate education program by The Museum School in the case of expulsion, until a more appropriate education provider has been secured by the parent.

Addressing Disputes

Parents of students with exceptionalities are in contact with the Special Education teacher not just at IEP meetings, but in frequent teacher-initiated communiqués. All federal and state regulations will be used to guide mediation of disputes on-site. Special education parents with concerns that are not rectified by the school administrator will be given access to the Governing Board as outlined in the grievance policy.

Parents are given a copy of the Grievance Policy upon enrollment of their student in The Museum School. Parents are provided with a copy of their rights as a parent at all IEP and 504 meetings. In addition, The Museum School will immediately notify DCSD and the relevant state designee upon receipt of a complaint made by a parent/guardian or student concerning section 504 and/or Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. The school will furnish a copy of such complaint and cooperate fully in the investigation, defense, and resolution of such complaint.

Record Confidentiality

All hard copies of records pertaining to students with exceptionalities and related confidential materials are supervised by the Special Education teacher and kept in locked files. Confidential records stored electronically are password protected and accessible only by the Special Education teacher, school leader, and other allowable staff (School Psychologist, related staff). The Museum School also maintains a list of names and positions of those staff allowed to view student records. Staff access of records is monitored by utilizing a password and access tracking software system. All staff who access records (including

interpreters used in IEP meetings and licensed vendors) sign a confidentiality agreement.

Technical Assistance and Training

Ongoing Professional Development is administered to all staff to address IDEA, ADA, Section 504, and related guidelines in serving the needs of Special Education students. Applicable personnel participate in state and district trainings as they become available. The school has implemented internal policies to ensure full compliance of all special education laws, rules, and statutes. These policies are based off of the GA DOE Special Education Rules Implementation Manual.

The Museum School assesses its Special Education staffing needs often to ensure that all students are being served based on the settings and services identified in their IEP. The Museum School will follow DCSD directives in the evaluation and identification of students with disabilities. The Museum School's comprehensive special education program from eligibility to servicing will continue to be fully compliant with state and federal mandates.

9. Describe methods, strategies and/or programs for students receiving supplemental education services. These services should be provided pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind.

To the extent The Museum School is required to provide supplemental educational services pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03 and related legislation, The Museum School staff will disseminate all required notices to eligible students and their families and ensure that all necessary information is transmitted to the appropriate local or state agencies. Required SES will be implemented, monitored, and assessed according to federal and state regulations. SES will be administered by a licensed vendor under contract with the school, and that contract will be dependent upon satisfactory assessment of programming and student progress that will be implemented by The Museum School.

10. Describe methods, strategies and/or programs for meeting the needs of students at-risk of academic failures through remediation.

The Museum School will follow all requirements of SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01 as well as all related state

and federal laws regarding the identification and implementation of intervention and remedial services for students who qualify for such services. The Museum School's students enrolled in the Early Intervention Program (EIP) and remedial education program (REP) will not exceed the maximum percentage of students permitted according to state law and regulation.

The Museum School will follow state guidelines regarding identification of students who qualify for the intervention and remediation programs. The school will create its policies and procedures based on the state's Early Intervention Program Manual and Remedial Education Program Manual.

MAP scores are used as an initial screener to determine potential eligibility for EIP and REP services. EIP and REP teachers consult with classroom teachers to confirm placement in the respective programs. The Museum School plans to continue implementing the Pull-out Model and Augmented Class Model in order to serve the identified EIP and REP students. Through these models, certified teachers pull out or push in to the general education classroom providing instruction to identified IEP/REP students. Student progress is monitored through informal and formal classroom assessments, in addition to MAP and Milestones scores.

11. Describe how the charter school will provide state and federally mandated services for English Language Learners (ELL). Include any diagnostic methods or instruments that will be used to identify and assess those students, including:

The Museum School is committed to meeting the needs of its ELL learners. The school has trained and employed a certified ELL teacher in order to meet the needs of its ELL population through push-in and pull-out services.

a. A description of the special language instructional program to be provided to ELLs that is designed to teach English, as well as general curriculum and who on staff will coordinate this effort.

The Museum School includes a Home Language Survey in its registration materials for new students. If any student identifies a language other than English in that survey, The Museum School administers the W-APT assessment to determine whether the student is eligible for language assistance. If it is determined

that the student is eligible for language assistance, that student will be identified as an English Language Learner (ELL) and will be reported as such on the next FTE count.

Services are provided for English Language Learners in accordance with all applicable Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations. Specific service models typically include but are not limited to an English immersion model and a pull-out model. The ELL teacher provides small group instruction for beginning English students through pull-out sessions while assisting the regular classroom teachers with instruction for students with more intermediate and advanced English proficiency. The Museum School endeavors to provide services for ELL students and printed materials for their families in their native language wherever possible. Interpreters will be made available at no cost to the students' families for IEP meetings. The Museum School plans to make staffing adjustments as necessary as student enrollment increases and as the ELL program increases. All staff members participate in Professional Development that bolsters their understanding and application of frameworks used to facilitate ELL learning. ELL students are exposed to the same learning opportunities and activities as the entire Museum School population. The Museum School employs the ELSA device to assist with translation during face-to-face conferences and phone conferences.

The Museum School's comprehensive ELL program from eligibility to servicing will continue to be fully compliant with state and federal mandates.

b. A provision indicating that ELL students will not be excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities in school because of the inability to speak and understand the language of instruction.

ELL students are exposed to the same learning opportunities and activities as the entire Museum School population. ELL students will not, at any time, be excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities at The Museum School as a result of the inability to speak and understand the language of instruction.

c. Appropriate evaluative standards for measuring the linguistic and academic progress of ELL students, including program exit criteria.

The school monitors the progress of ELL students through a variety of informal and formal assessments. The ELL teacher collaborates closely with general education teachers to ensure that instruction is aligned. All ELL students are required to participate in standardized and periodic assessments, with appropriate modifications for home language utilized as necessary. ACCESS will be administered to ELL students annually. Further, all appropriate accommodations, as detailed in each student's individualized plan, will be applied during Milestones testing. The school will follow the district and state guidelines regarding exit criteria.

12. List all proposed extracurricular activities or other auxiliary educational activities along with the grade levels in which these activities will be offered.

Museum School extracurricular programs and activities directly enrich and support the school's vision, mission, values, and curriculum. A full list of activities, fees and sponsors can be found in Appendix 5.

13. Which of the specific actions in the academic plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?

The Museum School's unique and innovative model requires waivers as identified in Appendix 51.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

14. State the school's Organizational Goals and Measures.

Organizational Goals—The fulfillment of the following organizational goals will be reported annually by the Charter School as part of their Annual Report. Note—academic and financial goals are presented in their respective sections.

Goal 1: The Charter School shall ensure all Governing Board Members receive effective training as required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-2072.

A. Measure 1: All Governing Board members shall participate in initial training and annual training thereafter.

Goal 2: The Charter School shall promote a positive school experience that engages students, parents, and teachers.

A. Measure 1: According to data reported by the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement Report Card, in each year of the charter, the percentage of students absent 15 days or more shall not exceed 10% and shall improve by at least 2 percentage points annually until the percentage of students absent 15 days or more is below 5%.

B. Measure 2: Each year, 90% of parents will indicate that they are at least “satisfied” with the overall quality of their child’s education as measured via an annual survey conducted at the conclusion of the school year, in which the options are very unsatisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied, and very satisfied. The survey response rate will be at least 85% of parents surveyed.

C. Measure 3: Each year, 90% of teachers will indicate that they are at least “satisfied” with the overall quality of their job as measured via an annual survey conducted at the conclusion of the school year, in which the options are very unsatisfied, unsatisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied, and very satisfied. The survey response rate will be at least 85% of teachers surveyed.

The Museum School met this goal each year of its previous 5-year charter.

Goal 3: The Charter School will minimize student attrition and maintain a sustainable enrollment size.

A. Measure 1: The Charter School will not exceed a maximum student attrition rate of 15 percent in any year.

The Museum School met this goal each year of its previous 5-year charter.

Goal 4: The Charter School will retain highly capable instructional staff in order to facilitate academic excellence.

A. Measure 1: Teacher retention rates will be at least 85% annually (exclusive of retirement, life-changing events, and job promotions).

The Museum School met this goal 4 of the 5 years of its previous 5-year charter.

Goal 5: The charter school will reflect the socio-demographic diversity of the community it serves with a targeted focus on economically disadvantaged students as defined by the Georgia Department of Education.*

A. Measure 1: During each year of the charter term (or until the school is within 10% of the DeKalb County School District average), the school will increase the total percentage of economically disadvantaged students (measured by those eligible for free and reduced lunch) by at least 2%. If the school fails to achieve a total growth of 4% by Year 2 and 8% by Year 4, it will implement a weighted lottery until the annual growth goal is met.

*An economically disadvantaged student is defined as a student whose family lives below the poverty line, qualifies for free and reduced lunch, or who qualifies for federal benefits including SNAP, TANF, WIC, Medicaid or PINS.

Weighted Lottery: In accordance with OCGA 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A), the Charter School may utilize a weighted lottery to provide an increased chance of admission to economically disadvantaged students. To facilitate the weighted lottery, applicants can indicate their ‘economically disadvantaged’ status on the admissions application and such status will be verified as part of the registration process. The weight for economically disadvantaged students will be calculated annually, if necessary. The minimum weight shall be 1.5 and the maximum weight shall be 4.0. The weight will be determined by reviewing the number of ‘economically disadvantaged’ applications received for a given year’s lottery, comparing that to the number of students needed to achieve the stated goal and assigning a weight accordingly.

Goal 6: The Charter School’s board of directors will reflect the socio-demographic diversity of the community it serves.

A. Measure 1: The board will elect at least 2 new socio-demographically diverse members by the end of the charter term.

Goal 7: The Charter School’s faculty and staff will reflect the socio-demographic diversity of the community it serves.

A. Measure 1: During each year of the charter term, at least 30% of the charter school's newly-hired staff will have experience working within the school's defined community or a community with similar socio-demographic diversity.

15. What specific actions will the school take to achieve its organizational performance objectives?

The actions and innovations below reflect instructional, financial and organizational best practices. The actions are aligned with CCRPI indicators and expectations as well as state and federal laws and regulations.

a. Describe the organizational innovations that will be implemented during the proposed charter term.

To ensure that the training is effective, relevant and compliant with O.C.G.A. 20-2-2072, The Museum School's Governance Committee will engage in an intense process to identify training topics and training vendors. Board self-assessments, questionnaires, and surveys will aid the Governance Committee in selecting training topics that are most applicable to the board. The Committee will implement a RFP process to find an approved trainer that will best align with the board's areas of growth and strength. The Museum School will maintain a high student attendance rate and low attrition rate by offering students a model for learning that is meaningful, relevant, and engaging. Learning expeditions, project-based learning opportunities, and the school's hands-on learning models engages students, thereby increasing attendance rates and stabilizing the student enrollment count. The school's culture of shared-decision making contributes positively to the school's community while giving parents an authentic voice. Parents are actively involved in task-forces and committees, sharing their perspective and guidance on a variety of operational topics. Parents have the opportunity to share feedback annually on a school survey. Museum School parents serve the school community and local community by donating volunteer hours.

Teacher satisfaction and retention are high priorities for Museum School administrators. As such, the school will continue to implement programs and strategies specifically designed to increase teacher

autonomy, empowerment, and flexibility, leading to higher rates of teacher satisfaction. Shared decision-making is an integral part of the school's culture. The Leadership, Data, and Museum Model Committees are comprised of staff representatives from each grade level, department, and team. The committee members work with school leaders to analyze data, brainstorm solutions, problem solve and ensure that the school's mission is carried out daily. The Museum School will continue to offer robust, relevant, and rigorous Professional Development for staff to ensure opportunities for growth and leadership.

Professional Learning Communities, based on individual teacher's areas of growth, continue to challenge teachers and aid them in developing skills specific to their growth areas. The Museum School will continue to offer a supportive mentor program to all new teachers to the school. The mentor/mentee program ensures that new teachers have the support they need to complete a successful first year at the museum school. Each of these initiatives and programs are evaluated annually to determine overall effectiveness. Following this data collection, programs are revised to reflect program strengths and address program challenges. Each of these innovations are aligned to the school's missions and core values and directly or indirectly impact student success.

b. Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase organizational effectiveness.

The organizational innovations will increase the overall effectiveness and success of the organization because they are based on best practices and research. Further, each of these innovations engage and give a voice to some of the school community's most critical stakeholders—parents, students, and staff.

c. Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique school.

The Museum School's culture of innovation, exceeding expectations, and strategic planning is evident within each of the practices previously described. The innovations reflect the school's reflective nature, always growing and striving to improve. Most importantly, the practices and innovations listed demonstrate the school's focus on its highest priority - students and student success.

16. Which of the specific actions in the organizational plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?

The Museum School's unique and innovative model requires waivers as identified in Appendix 51.

IV. GOVERNANCE

17. Describe how an autonomous governing board will make decisions for the school.

The business and affairs of The Museum School are managed under the direction of the Board of Directors of the Avondale Education Association. The Museum School is under the control and management of the DeKalb Board of Education. The Directors adopt rules and regulations regarding the conduct of their meetings and the management of the Corporation as they deem proper and consistent with the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, the Charter, and the laws of the State of Georgia. All actions taken by the Board must ensure that the school adheres to this charter. The Board holds the Principal and staff accountable for the academic results and fiscal responsibility of the school. The Board provides additional support for the school by way of fundraising, marketing, establishing partnerships with museums and other community organizations in ways consistent with the mission, vision, and values of the school as stated herein.

a. Identify each member of the governing board; describe the composition of the governing board (number of members, skill sets to be represented, how members are/will be representative of the school and the community, etc.; describe how and when board members will be selected, and the terms that governing board members will serve.

Board Structure

The Governing Board is comprised of people with professional expertise in key facets of governance, including non-profit organizational leadership and financial expertise (See Appendix 1 for the Board's credentials). To continue to enhance our effectiveness, we have joined the Georgia Charter Schools Association and attend their conferences and training workshops for Board members as needed.

The Governing Board of Directors (“the Governing Board”) shall consist of not less than eleven (11) and not more than seventeen (17) voting Directors which shall include the following: parent/guardian representatives elected by a simple majority vote of the Board; community representatives elected by a simple majority vote of the Board; and up to two (2) representatives from museums or other community organizations which partner with The Museum School elected by a simple majority of the Board. In an effort to encourage parent and community involvement from all geographical areas included in the attendance zone, the Board shall seek to include parents and community members from all such areas. Directors of the Board shall be elected at an annual or special meeting, which shall be conducted in accordance with these Bylaws. Directors shall be elected at each annual Directors’ meeting; provided that if no such annual meeting is held or if the Directors are not appointed or elected thereat, the Directors may be appointed or elected at any special meeting of the Directors held for such purpose. The Principal shall serve as a member of the board in an *ex officio*, non-voting capacity.

Board Terms

The terms of the service for the members of the Governing Board shall be two years. Members shall be permitted to serve consecutive terms, with a three-term limit. Should a vacancy occur on the Board, a replacement will be selected according to the Bylaws. A member elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected or appointed for the unexpired terms of his or her predecessor in office. Directors who are officers shall serve as officers for a term of one year, and have a three-term limit as officers. Any member may be removed from office in accordance with the Bylaws. Due to these board term limits established in our bylaws, we anticipate 3-5 board member vacancies during the length of the new charter term.

Board Recruitment

As the board seeks additional members, the following areas of expertise will be targeted: * Governance, *Grievance resolution, *Employment law * Development *Academic leadership * Finance * Personnel * *Facility management *Diversity and inclusion expertise

The criteria by which Board candidates are selected for election will be standardized to ensure fair process. All new board candidates will be required to meet one of the following:

1. Service on a committee for at least 6 months
2. Completion of volunteer hours as specified by the governance committee.
3. Demonstrated commitment to The Museum School, as approved by a simple majority vote of the governing board.

Additionally and pursuant to Organizational Goal 6 of this petition, we will also seek and consider the sociodemographic diversity of board candidates.

These requirements enable current board members to assess the added value of each candidate and ensure each elected member is a viable, productive candidate committed to the mission of the school.

b. Describe the governing board’s function, duties and role in the areas of budget, resource allocation, personnel decisions (primarily school leader selection, evaluation, and termination), establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, curriculum and school operations.

All decisions of the Governing Board will be made in accordance with the mission of The Museum School. The Board shall actively seek input from parents, museum partners, staff members and the Principal in the decision-making process. In addition to the annual reporting requirements of State Law, the Board will conduct an annual board assessment to ensure that the decisions and policy making are in line with the Charter, and the mission of The Museum School.

The Board Finance Committee works with the school’s leadership to develop an annual budget. This annual planning and budgeting process will begin at least 120 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year and include projections for a five-year planning horizon. The Board of Directors will approve each annual budget and hold the school’s leadership accountable for operating within the budget.

To oversee operations on a monthly basis, the Business Manager prepares financial statements comparing actual to budgeted revenues and expenditures for the Principal and the Board of Directors. The Treasurer

of the Board (Finance Committee Chair) is responsible for reviewing the financial data, bank reconciliations, and payroll reports generated from a third-party provider monthly. This data is compiled into a summary that the Treasurer presents to the Board at each monthly meeting. As an additional check, the school is required to participate in an annual external audit and has received an unqualified opinion and clean audit report every year since its inception over the last six years.

In addition to a review of monthly financial statements, the Board of Directors and Principal determine the additional operational performance metrics, reporting frequency and processes desired to monitor the organizational and financial health of the school. Such metrics will be reported focusing on performance in operational, financial, employee, or other stakeholder categories. The Business Manager, Finance Committee and Principal are responsible for executing the performance management process. The Board of Directors reviews the reports on a regular basis to ensure the financial stability of the school. They assign accountability for any issue that may arise and facilitate resolution of the issue.

For details on the board's evaluation of the school leader's performance, please see answer 17k.

c. Please use the Governance matrix (found on the GADOE Charter School Division's website) to illustrate the level of autonomy your Governing Board will have.

See Appendix 39.

d. Use this section to provide a narrative of your matrix, including anything in the matrix that requires further explanation or clarification.

All narrative is included in the Governance matrix, Appendix 39.

e. Describe your plan for ensuring that you maintain a diverse board with broad skill sets.

- Governance Committee hosts open houses semi-annually to meet with and field questions of interested community members
- Website provides interest form open to public to indicate interest. All submitted forms are reviewed by a Board member and contacted to discuss potential and background. They are provided details on open house and interview schedule.

- Maintain database of interested parties and review regularly when needs/opening arise or opportunities to enhance Board effectiveness and student achievement exist.
- Include information on committee and board service regularly via email, newsletters, social media, and school programs.
- Utilize skills and background matrix for evaluating Board members to insure objectivity and determine best fit for positions and Board diversity and innovation.
- Encourage school community to proliferate committee involvement and Board opportunities

f. Describe how and why governing board members may be removed.

At the discretion of Board, a member who is not meeting roles and responsibilities as stated in the Bylaws, may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote.

g. Georgia law requires Charter Schools to provide initial training for newly approved charter school Governing Boards as well as annual governance training thereafter.

In compliance with State code 160-4-09 and based on our ongoing commitment to excellence in governance, the Board will recruit the services of State Board of Education approved charter board experts to support the development of the board. The experts will be enlisted to provide training and guidance in implementing SBOE requirements and charter board best practices. See Appendix 40 for Governing Board Training and Development Tracker.

h. Describe your plan and timeline for securing a provider for your initial governance training as well as annual training thereafter.

Each school year the Governance committee reviews the list of the SBOE approved experts in Charter School Board training. A selection of at least three vendors from the list are identified and solicited for services to potentially provide training to the board for the school year. Each vendor is asked to submit a proposal for consideration to provide training and guidance in implementing charter board best practices. Topics of training and support might include: charter school finance/QBE, governance best practices, facilitating educational excellence, the structure and growth of the Board of Directors. The Museum

School board of directors practices an ongoing recruitment process for new board members. Each year an open house is hosted in order to educate potential board members on the Museum School and the responsibilities of board members. Additionally, interested parties are invited to submit their information and join one of the board level committees. Board member retention is of utmost importance and each board member is asked to commit for a minimum of a two-year term. Board members are asked annually to submit a letter of intent to return for service in the next school year.

i. Disclose any potential conflicts of interest and describe how the governing board will ensure that current and future board members avoid conflicts of interest.

Each individual currently serving on the Board has made a full disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest by fully completing the DeKalb County School System Charter School Petitioner Requirement Conflict of Interest Form. These forms are included as Appendix 2.

The policy-making board members and employees of The Museum School shall be prohibited from participating in discussions or voting on any matter relating to any business transaction or affair, which would cause an actual conflict of interest or give the appearance of a conflict of interest. In addition to the Board of Directors being responsible for self- monitoring, we have a conflict of interest policy. The policy requires these three crucial elements: 1) full disclosure of personal and business connections— provided at least annually at a minimum and when specific circumstances arise; 2) abstention from voting and discussion when conflict or potential conflict exists; 3) abstention from decision-making when conflict or potential conflict exists. Additionally, all Board members complete annual training on best practices in avoiding conflicts of interest.

j. How will the governing board’s role uphold the school’s mission and vision?

The Board has and will continue to take all necessary steps in order to ensure that it upholds the mission of the school. Specifically, each meeting of the Governing Board is opened with the reading of the school’s mission statement and the school’s values. Further, as part of the training for new board members, such new board members are required to read and review the mission statement, the values, the

charter and the bylaws of the corporation. Additionally, each new board member is given a detailed description of the role of the board in the governing of the school, descriptions of the roles of each officer of the board, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each committee and must sign a board member agreement detailing these responsibilities. On a yearly basis, the Board conducts a self-review, which includes detailed questions about the performance of the board to date, specifically including whether or not the Board has followed the mission of the school.

k. How will the governing board evaluate the principal's performance?

The Principal's performance is evaluated in several ways: (1) a personal growth plan created by the principal in the summer and reviewed bi-annually by the Personnel committee, (2) a mid-year assessment conducted by the Board of Directors, (3) an end of the year assessment conducted by the Personnel committee to ensure the principal has successfully fulfilled the academic and institutional goals set forth in the charter, and (4) end of the year surveys of teachers, staff, museum partners, parents and students. Surveys are reviewed and analyzed by the Board, principal and/or the Personnel committee, as applicable for each type of survey (5) The principal will be observed and assessed by the chair of Personnel using the Georgia state mandated Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES). LKES is the assessment tool by the State of Georgia used to determine leader effectiveness

l. How will the governing board ensure effective organizational planning and financial stability?

The Board Finance Committee will work with the school's leadership to develop an annual budget. This annual planning and budgeting process will typically begin 120 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year and include long-term projections. The Board of Directors will approve each annual budget and hold the school's leadership accountable for operating within the budget. To oversee operations on a monthly basis, the Business Manager prepares financial statements comparing actual to budgeted revenues and expenditures for the Principal and the Board of Directors. The Treasurer of the Board (Finance Committee Chair) is responsible for reviewing the financial data, bank reconciliations, and payroll reports generated from a third-party provider monthly. This data is compiled into a summary that the Treasurer

presents to the Board at each monthly meeting. As an additional check, the school is required to participate in an annual external audit.

In addition to a review of monthly financial statements, the Board of Directors also reviews certain operational performance metrics as presented by the Principal to the board each month. Such metrics are reported with the Principal focusing his/her monthly update on performance in operational, financial, employee, or other stakeholder categories. The Business Manager, Finance Committee and Principal are responsible for executing the performance management process. The Board of Directors reviews the reports on a monthly basis to ensure the financial stability of the school. The Board Chair assigns accountability to the appropriate committee chair for any issue that may arise and facilitate resolution of the issue. The Board of Directors also conducts an annual self-performance review to ensure that it is meeting Board Roles and Responsibilities.

m. How will parents, community members, or other interested parties be involved in the charter schools governing board?

All Board meetings and committee meetings are open and announced to the public, parents are notified of all board meetings through the weekly school newsletter and the schedule for such meetings is made available to the parents and community members as required by the Open Meetings Act. Public comment is welcome and invited during all such meetings. We encourage and continually seek non-Board participation on Board-level committees to obtain input and facilitate succession planning.

n. How will the school promote parental and staff involvement in school governance?

The Governance committee will sponsor an information session a minimum of once per year. Governing board members will attend school-based events, annual surveys are sent to staff/parents to assess knowledge base of school governance and where gaps are. The board reviews results of the assessment for process improvement. Quarterly emails will be sent to all parents encouraging participation by requesting they join or participate in some other way.

o. How will the school communicate with students' families?

Each teacher communicates with parents at least weekly via email. Teachers also conduct parent/teacher conferences twice/year. The school sends out a weekly newsletter to all parents and maintains a Facebook page/Twitter account to communicate with families. Additionally, the Board summary meeting minutes will be posted on school premise and on the school website.

18. Grievances

a. What will be school leadership's role in resolving teacher, parent and student grievances and other conflicts?

It is our intention that most conflicts be resolved via an informal process. In the event that parents, students, teachers, or employees are not satisfied with the resolution, the grievance policy and process has been developed based upon best practices and DCSD policy and guidelines. A copy of this policy is attached in Appendix 41.

b. What will the governing board's role be in resolving teacher, parent, and student grievances and other conflicts? This should include specific procedures and protocols for grievance resolution for each group. Describe the plan or method that the charter school's governing board will utilize for resolving conflicts with the DCSD and/or Board of Education. Explain how conflicts will be addressed and resolved.

Details about the governing board's role in the grievance process for teachers, parents and students can be found in Appendix 41. The Museum School will seek to resolve conflicts with the DCSD, should they arise, in a manner consistent with State Board of Education Rule No. 160-1-3-.01, which requires local boards of education to establish grievance procedures to resolve problems at the lowest possible organizational level with a minimum of conflict and formal proceedings. The Governing Board of The Museum School has already developed a working relationship with DCSD. We hope to build upon this relationship as we move in to the next phase of school development. Should any conflicts arise with DCSD, The Museum School Board Representative will first contact the DeKalb County Director of Charter Schools, School Flexibility. If a resolution is not achieved, The Museum School Board

Representative will then contact the Superintendent of DCSD. If a conflict cannot be resolved via such process, in order to resolve the conflict in an expedited matter, the Board would enter into an agreement with the DCSD to have any disputes resolved via mediation. If mediation were to be unsuccessful, the Board and the local board would agree to a binding arbitration.

c. Describe the method that the governing board plans to utilize for resolving internal conflicts.

It is our intention that most conflicts be resolved via an informal process. Board members are encouraged to communicate with each other to resolve any interpersonal conflicts or other issues. In the event that the conflict can't be resolved, the issue will be presented to the entire Board of Directors and brought to a vote.

19. In the appendix, attach an official copy of the certificate of incorporation for the required Georgia nonprofit corporation from the Georgia Secretary of State, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b)(4).

Attached as Appendix 6.

20. Provide a brief description for each governing board member that explains what role they will play on the board and why they were chosen to participate in the founding group.

Governing Board members were chosen based on the criteria described in question 17. Officers and Committee Chairs were selected based on individual skill sets. Committees of The Museum School Governing Board are each chaired by a member of the Governing Board. The committees and their respective responsibilities are listed in Appendix 42. Board member resumes are attached as Appendix 1.

21. In the appendix, please provide the proposed charter school's bylaws, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-22065(b)(4).

A copy of Avondale Education Association, Inc.'s current bylaws, dated December 15, 2015, is attached hereto as Appendix 12.

a. The method by which the board will be elected or appointed and removed, as well as the term of office for each member.

Sections 4.02 and 4.03 of the bylaws describe the method by which directors are elected or appointed to the Board. Section 4.08 of the bylaws describes the method by which directors may be removed from the Board. Section 4.04 of the bylaws states that directors serve two year terms, with a three term limit.

b. The number of members to serve on the board after the charter school is authorized (the minimum required by DCSD is five), and identify any seats reserved for specific constituents.

Section 4.01 of the bylaws provides that the Board of Directors shall consist of not less than eleven and not more than seventeen directors. Section 4.03 of the bylaws provides that the Head of School shall serve as a member of the Board in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity. No other seats are reserved for specific constituents.

c. The responsibility and authority of the board for the policy and operations of the charter school.

Section 2.01 of the bylaws provides that the corporation (Avondale Education Association, Inc.) has the power and authority to create and govern The Museum School of Avondale Estates, fulfill the mission of the Museum School of Avondale Estates, and perform all acts necessary or incidental to the above and to do whatever is deemed necessary, useful, advisable, or conducive, directly or indirectly, as determined by the Board of Directors, to carry out any of the purposes of the corporation. Section 3.01 of the bylaws provides that all authority of the corporation shall be vested in the Board of Directors. Section 4.01 of the bylaws provides that the Board shall oversee the general policies of the corporation as well as provide guidance and support to ensure the continued long-term strength of the corporation.

d. A list of committees of the governing board (which must include, at minimum, an executive, finance, and education/accountability committee).

Current Board-level committees are: Governance Committee, Finance Committee, Academic Excellence Committee, Communication Committee, Development Committee, Facilities Committee, Personnel Committee, and Risk Management Committee. In addition, the bylaws authorize the Board to designate an Executive Committee.

e. The calendar for board meetings, providing for a minimum of six meetings per year.

The Board meets regularly on a monthly basis. The current Board meeting calendar is posted and maintained online at <http://themuseumschool.org/welcome/board/board-meetings>

Section 10.01 of the bylaws requires a minimum of six meetings of the Board per year.

f. A list of the quorum and voting requirements for board meetings and committees.

Section 11.01 of the bylaws provides that a majority of the incumbent members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business, and that, except as otherwise required by the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code, the Articles of Incorporation, or the bylaws, all decisions of the Board shall be by majority vote of those present.

22. Provide the complete and signed conflict of interest form for each proposed founding board member, located at the end of these Guidelines.

Complete, signed conflict of interest forms from each member of the governing Board are attached as Appendix 2.

V. CONTRACTS WITH EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS OR OTHER PARTNERS

23. Does the charter school intend to contract, or has the school contracted, with an education service provider (ESP) or other charter partner, to provide management or consulting services?

N/A - The Museum School has not and does not intend to contract with an ESP, charter partner, or provide management or consulting services.

24. List any proposed business arrangements or partnerships with existing schools, educational programs, businesses, or nonprofit organizations (excluding those relationships discussed in previous section).

The only formal partnerships that The Museum School engages in are with curricular, educational partners as described in section III.

VI. FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

25. State the school's Financial Goals and Measures

a. Financial objectives reflect where the school envisions itself financially at the end of the charter term.

The fulfillment of the following financial goals and measures will be reported annually by the school in addition to the Annual Report.

Goal 1: The Charter School will be economically sustainable.

A. Measure 1: Each year, the school will operate in a fiscally sound manner as measured by an external audit that is submitted on time to the Department. See Appendix 52.

B. Measure 2: Actual and proposed budgets for each school year will demonstrate effective allocation.

C. Measure 3: Yearly balance sheets will demonstrate that the school maintains adequate cash reserves.

D. Measure 4: The school will meet all Generally Accepted Governmental Accounting Standards (GAGAS) as demonstrated by external, annual audit reports.

E. Measure 5: The school will meet all financial reporting deadlines set by the Department. The Museum School's Board has developed a 5-year strategic plan that aligns with these objectives. The Museum School continues working toward these goals and maintains scorecards and a calendar to monitor progress.

The Museum School met this goal each year of its previous 5-year charter.

b. Objectives emphasize fiscal health and sustainability.

The core of the financial strategic plan of The Museum School is to maintain financial sustainability by ensuring adequate resources and managing resources effectively. The first step to financial oversight is creating and maintaining a Board approved operating budget. At each monthly Finance Committee meeting, the Committee reviews in-depth the School's monthly and year-to-date progress as compared to the budget. The Board Treasurer communicates the results of the review with the full Board each month as well.

c. Describe the school's plans for fiscal management; and specify how the school will manage budgets and expenditures.

The Board of Directors has appointed a Finance Committee consisting of Board Treasurer, several additional Board members, community members and the Business Manager who are responsible for the financial management of the charter. The Finance Committee meets each month to review financial statements and ensure that The Museum School is operating within the Board approved budget. The Finance Committee will recommend any budget adjustments if needed at a mid-year check in from the Board. The Finance Committee works with the school's leadership to develop an annual budget. The budget process begins 120 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. The first step is to meet with the Principal to determine staffing and identify any new initiatives needed to fulfill the School's mission. The Finance Committee recommends the "draft" budget to the Board of Directors for approval, adjustments are made if needed and the "final" budget is approved by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors holds the school's leadership accountable for operating within the budget. To oversee operations on a monthly basis, the Business Manager prepares financial statements comparing actual to budgeted revenues and expenses for the Principal and the Board of Directors. The Treasurer of the Board is responsible for reviewing the financial data and bank reconciliations and presents financial reports monthly to the Board of Directors. The reports include Profit and Loss Statement, Cash Flow Statement and Balance Sheet, an example is attached as Appendix 43.

As a final verification of the fiscal health of the School, the Board hires an external audit firm to conduct an annual audit. The Board expects to and has earned an unqualified opinion each year.

d. See attached spreadsheet for 5-year revenue and expenditure projection. See Appendix 19.

e. Background of the school's Chief Financial Officer and Compliance with Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9.04

Katherine J. Cota is currently serving as Chief Financial officer of The Museum School. Mrs. Cota is the Treasurer of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Finance Committee. Mrs. Cota holds a B.B.A in Accounting from Georgia State University and is currently a Tax Senior with Frazier & Deeter, LLC. She holds a M.S. in Accounting from Liberty University and holds a Georgia CPA license. With her

degree, license, and 12 years of experience in business and financial management Mrs. Cota's credentials comply with the guidance for Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9.04.

f. Representatives responsible for financial management of the charter and Crime/Fidelity Bond

The school's Principal with the Business Manager continues to be primarily responsible for the day to day financial management of the charter. The performance of these functions will be closely monitored by the finance committee on a monthly basis. The Treasurer reports to the board of the school regarding the financial management of the charter at each board meeting.

We will continue to maintain during the entire length of the charter a Crime/Fidelity Bond in the amount of \$1 million, covering all persons receiving or disbursing funds. While the Crime/Fidelity Bond is renewed annually, a bond has been in place since July 1, 2011.

26. What specific actions will the school take to achieve the financial performance objectives?

The Museum School will continue to maintain emphasis on developing effective budgets and monitoring actual revenue and expenses as compared to the Board approved budgets. Additional details follow.

a. Describe the financial innovations that will be implemented during the proposed charter term.

While the school has little control over revenue, effort continues to go into identifying appropriate use of the funds available to maximize impact in the classroom. By continuing to have monthly reviews of actual revenue and expenses vs. budgeted revenue and expenses, the Board of Directors along with the School's leadership will maintain the financial health of the School by being proactive regarding any changes that might be needed. Financial training for all Board of Directors ensures that all members can actively participate in the financial health of the School.

b. Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase financial effectiveness.

By setting the financial direction of the School through budgets and continually monitoring the adherence to the budgets through monthly review and reports, the Board can maintain the financial stability of the School. The School will also continue to use historical data to monitor trends and adapt to any changes in financial performance.

c. Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique school.

By maintaining financial stability, the School is in a position to adjust as innovative ideas for the classroom arise. The school has a proven record for managing funding and expenditures proactively and in monitoring the changes in financial positions.

27. Fundraising or Other Sources of Income

a. Please describe in detail the school's plans for securing other sources of funding.

The Museum School does not rely on fundraising for financial sustainability; our primary operating budgets have been historically and will continue to be based on known sources of revenue from per pupil funding from the State and DeKalb County. To secure additional resources, the Development Committee of the Board works with The Museum School Foundation ("Foundation"), a separate 501(c)(3) organization whose primary purpose is to raise funds for capital development and other programs to benefit The Museum School. As discussed in more detail below, over the past four (4) years, the *Exceeding Expectations* Capital Campaign raised approximately \$3.9M in grants, gifts, and receivables to fund renovation of the Forrest Hills facility The Museum School currently occupies.

In the fall of 2016, The Museum School and the Foundation will launch the *Inspiring Excellence* Capital Campaign to fund construction of a new media center. Initial calculations suggest that we will endeavor to raise approximately \$1.5M over the three (3) years of the campaign to fund this project. The Foundation will follow its Strategic Plan, which focuses on key fundraising strategies, is reviewed with the Board of The Museum School on a yearly basis and is revised based on the previous year's results and upcoming annual budget needs. As demonstrated by the success of the *Exceeding Expectations* Capital Campaign, The Museum School has already shown its ability to generate significant funding through individual and community donations, foundations, and grants.

The Museum School shall be solely responsible for the use of and accountability for any federal, state, or local grant or grant obtained from any private source. The Museum School shall also be solely responsible for the repayment of any loan or demand for the repayment of grant funds obtained by the

school (although neither are currently outstanding). Funding by DeKalb County Schools shall not be affected by the charter school's receipt of any grant or funds from another source.

b. Describe any planned fundraising efforts and who will lead and coordinate these efforts.

The Development Committee and Foundation identify the following upcoming fundraising efforts:

- *Spring Parent Fundraising Campaign:* The Spring Fundraising Campaign focuses on garnering 100% participation from parents of students. On average, over 80% of Museum School families participate in the Parent Campaign.
- *Annual Silent Auction:* The Silent Auction is a key annual event that has a separate chair and associated subcommittee. Revenue generated by this event on average meets or exceeds \$100,000.
- *Foundation and Outside Private Sources:* The Museum School and the Foundation have an exemplary record of raising funds for capital development.
- *State Facility Grants:* The Museum School has earned a state facilities grant each year that it has applied and will continue these efforts.

c. Independent private funding sources that have been secured must be evidenced through a letter of intent, commitment letters, and/or loan agreements from the funder may be included as an Appendix item.

For the benefit of The Museum School, numerous parents and community members guarantee a line of credit with Fidelity Bank, which is currently in the renewal process. The previous line of credit agreement is attached in Appendix 44.

d. If established, provide evidence of your organization's federal tax-exempt status in the Appendix.

Evidence of our tax-exempt status is attached as Appendix 54.

28. Which of the specific actions in the financial plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?

The Museum School is not asking to waive specific financial policies. The school will, however, benefit from the flexibility offered through waivers related to the budgeting process. See Appendix 51.

VII. STUDENT ADMISSIONS

29. How will students be admitted to the charter school?

The Charter School shall comply with the open enrollment and admissions provisions set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066. Enrollment shall be open to any student in accordance with the following criteria:

a. Attendance Zone.

Enrollment shall be open to any student who resides within the attendance zone, which is defined as the attendance zone for Peachcrest and Avondale Elementary as drawn by the DeKalb County School District for the 2016-2017 school year. These zones include students residing in zip codes 30030, 30032, 30033, 30002, 30079, 30317 and 30035. Demographic data demonstrate that the constituency of the Avondale and Peachcrest Elementary School zones is diverse in terms of gender, race and socioeconomic status and similar to that of DeKalb County as a whole.

In the event space remains available at any grade level at the time of the application deadline set by the Charter School, the attendance zone shall be expanded to include the entire DeKalb County School District. The Charter School shall have a single lottery with all applicants if the number of applicants exceeds the number of spots.

One of the founding principles of The Museum School is simple: **Local community involvement in and ownership of a school is central to its success.** In 2010, after demographic research, public input and legal counsel, the school's founders defined a primary attendance zone that reflects the DCSD-defined attendance areas of Avondale Elementary and (now) Peachcrest Elementary that are immediately adjacent to The Museum School. A secondary zone includes all of DeKalb County.

The founding board's goals in establishing this primary and secondary attendance zone are clearly held in the organization's historical documents:

- Ensure a diverse, growing area with ample students to fill the school.

- Ensure racial and socioeconomic diversity.
- Maintain a community school focus per the school's mission.
- Ensure the zone allows for fiscal responsibility.

Now in its 6th year of operation, the school serves 539 diverse students. 86% come from our primary attendance zone, while the remaining 14% come from our secondary zone. The school's governing board stands firm in our belief that our tiered attendance zone allows The Museum School to provide a quality education to as many children as possible, ensure the school remains financially responsible, and uphold our mission to develop and maintain a neighborhood school. We believe:

1. Having a neighborhood school that's within a geographic boundary allows us to create a school with tight-knit student, parent, partner and local community relationships. Building relationships and putting learning into action outside of the school building is critical to our model.
2. Having a geographically manageable attendance zone allows our parents to fulfill their significant commitment to our school. Fulfilling their parent volunteer commitment, participating in exhibit nights, PTO programs and learning expeditions could be an obstacle to parents coming from far corners of DeKalb County. This parent involvement is central to our mission and success.
3. Having a clearly defined attendance zone helps mitigate transportation barriers. It allows a diverse group of students within the primary attendance zone who would not be able to provide transportation 15-20 miles to another charter or magnet school access to our innovative model by walking, biking or short car rides.
4. Our facility was originally built as a neighborhood school in the 1950s and is located deep within a neighborhood. It was designed to handle walkers, bikers and a limited number of cars. Additional vehicle traffic created by a broad attendance zone would exceed the capacity of existing neighborhood streets and school facilities.
5. State law allows for the creation of charter attendance zones.

While we will always be limited in the number of students we can serve at our facility (588) and believe a tiered attendance zone is the best model for our school, we do strongly desire to share our model with as many students, teachers and parents as possible. We believe we can best do that by actively sharing our model with students, teachers and administrators in other DeKalb County Schools. Sharing our model is part of our strategic plan and we have successfully implemented systems and programs to do so, though we would welcome additional conversation with DCSD about how we might expand and enhance our knowledge sharing among charter and traditional schools.

b. Please state the following enrollment priorities that apply, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1), in the rank order the school will use them.

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A), the Charter School shall give enrollment priority to the following categories of applicants and in the following priority:

- i. Siblings of students enrolled in the Charter School; and
- ii. Students whose parent or guardian is a member of the Governing Board of the Charter School or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the Charter School.

c. Describe the rules and procedures that will govern admission and registration.

The Museum School enrolls any student who meets the residency and age requirements and submits a timely application unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In such cases, all such applicants shall have an equal chance of admission through a random selection process. The Museum School does not discriminate in its enrollment procedures or educational programs based on intellectual or athletic ability, aptitude, disability, race, class, gender, family structure, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, or any other basis prohibited by law.

Admissions Procedure

Each fall, The Museum School will publicize and announce enrollment procedures to the entire attendance zone through its website, open houses, hand-outs, and direct mailings. Each January, currently enrolled students are re-enrolled unless his or her parent or guardian indicates to the school a

desire to not return. From approximately February 1 to February 15, excluding weekends, The Museum School will have an open enrollment period for the school's attendance zone. Any such student shall be eligible to be enrolled provided that: 1) the student meets age and residency requirements and his/her grade level is offered and 2) the student's application has been completed and returned to the school no later than February 15, or the designated end of open enrollment. If the number of applicants exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building, all students who submitted a timely application will have an equal chance of admission through a random selection process. The Museum School will only enroll students residing within the attendance zone with the following exception: a student whose parent or guardian is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee or board member at The Museum School per O.C.G.A. 20-2-2066. Official notification will be provided by The Museum School to families of students with admission offers, who will then have fifteen (15) days to notify the school of their intent. Should a student or family decline admission or fail to respond within 15 days, that student will be removed from the roster and the slot will be offered to the first student of that grade level on the wait list until all slots have been filled. Lottery procedures are attached as Appendix 45.

d. Describe procedures for situations if student applications for admissions exceed available space.

If the number of timely applicants received by The Museum School exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building, The Museum School shall ensure that such applicants have an equal chance of being admitted through a random-selection lottery.

In order to participate in the lottery, applications must be received prior to the enrollment application deadline as established by the board. The lottery will take place within 5 days of the enrollment deadline. The lottery will be open to the public and advertised in advance. A non-biased 3rd party will witness and certify the validity of the lottery. During Open Enrollment, applications will be collected and qualifications will be verified.

Upon closing of each Open Enrollment period, if the number of qualified applications from applicants residing in the primary attendance zone exceeds the number of available seats for any or all grade levels,

a random selection (Lottery), which shall be open to the public, will be conducted of those applicants residing in the primary attendance. If the number of qualified applications of applicants residing in the primary attendance zone does not exceed the number of available seats for any or all grade levels, but the total number of qualified applications from both the primary and secondary zones does exceed the number of available seats for such grade, then a Lottery will be conducted of all qualified applications for such grade.

All qualifying applicants will be contacted of date, time and place of Lottery via web-posting.

It is not necessary for an applicant's parent/guardian to be present at the Lottery in order for an applicant to participate in the lottery. The lottery will be video recorded. The procedure will be explained to the audience. Preferences, Grade Order , Drawing to Select the Students, Wait List Process, Notification Process, Intent to Enroll Process, Questions will be answered prior to the beginning of the drawings. The order in which the grades will be drawn will be determined by ordering the grades beginning with the grade where the applications received exceed the available spots by the highest percentage and ending with the grade for which the opposite is true.

In order to make this process as transparent as possible, students with preference will be drawn (based on established grade order as detailed above) and placed on lists first. The random lottery to select students will then be conducted, drawing all names from each grade before moving to the next grade level. A 3rd party will draw names, pass the chip to the caller and verify that the caller is reading the correct number. As each student is selected, that student's assigned number will be placed on the class list, and that student's sibling will be added to the appropriate class list for that grade or any other grades. A sibling will be placed based on available space. If the class is at capacity, the sibling receives preference on the waiting list. The numbers will be recorded as they are pulled until all the seats at that grade level are filled. Once all seats are filled, all remaining names will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. A waiting list lottery for the applicants in the secondary attendance zone will be conducted for each class for which the applicants from the primary attendance zone exceed the number of

available seats for that grade. The names of the applicants from the waiting list lottery will be placed on the waiting list after the names of any applicants from primary attendance zone.

A student cannot lose his/her seat on the class list after it has been awarded. After all names have been drawn and placed, waiting lists will be adjusted to award sibling preference. Sibling preference applies only when the sibling is placed on the class list, as opposed to placement on a waiting list. Student preference siblings will be moved up the waiting list based on their original order, bypassing singletons. Applications received after the Open Enrollment period will be placed at the end of the waiting list (for both the primary attendance zone and the secondary attendance zone) after the lottery has concluded, in the order in which they were received. If a class is not at capacity at the end of the lottery, additional students will be added as qualified applications are received, in the order they are received. If additional seats become available after the Lottery, they will be filled from the applicants, in order, on the waiting list. Sibling preference will be applied to the waiting list only at the time of the lottery. The waiting list order will not be adjusted after the time of the lottery, even if one sibling gets onto a class list.

Applications are only valid for one year. New applications for the following year will need to be submitted for next year's consideration. The waiting list does not carry over from year to year.

As outlined in Organizational Goal 5, the school MAY employ a weighted lottery in accordance with OCGA 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A).

e. How will the charter school reach students representative of the racial and socioeconomic diversity in the school system?

As outlined in Organizational Goal 5, the Museum School Board of Directors has identified socioeconomic diversity as a critical focus for this charter term. Among other tactics, we will focus the school's long-standing student recruitment committee on areas of our primary attendance zone with high levels of socioeconomic need. Our current student recruitment plan is shared as appendix 47.

f. How does the school plan to recruit students and maintain/increase enrollment? Please include an enrollment application. See appendix 46.

The Museum School's leadership continues to evaluate and develop the recruitment plan outlined above as needed. Recruitment efforts aimed at *maintaining enrollment* include:

- 1) Grade-level and school-wide functions continue to reinforce a sense of connection between families and the school.
- 2) Active communication of school news and updates by the teachers and principal to highlight exciting activities and achievements by The Museum School staff and students.
- 3) Exhibit nights will continue to be a setting to highlight student learning and achievement and will continue to be instrumental in maintaining enrollment.
- 4) All enrolled families will be contacted in January to ensure they are planning on returning the following school year. Any families identified as unsure of their intent to enroll will be met with to determine what needs may be met to ensure maintenance of enrollment.

Efforts aimed at *identifying and capitalizing on recruiting opportunities*:

- 1) The principal and Recruitment Committee will review current enrollment trends to identify geographic areas where our outreach is lacking and determine strategies to increase awareness in those regions prior to Open Enrollment.
- 2) The principal will conduct exit interviews with families leaving the school to identify any areas for improvement. If possible, the Student Recruitment Committee will address these issues for further recruitment or maintenance of enrollment.

See Appendix 47 for the 2016-2017 Recruitment Plan.

g. Attach the charter school's proposed annual calendar and a draft of the charter school's daily school schedule. See Appendices 3 and 4.

VIII. FACILITIES

30. Describe the school facility that the charter school proposes to use.

The Museum School occupies the former Forrest Hills Elementary School building, 923 Forrest Boulevard, under a 10-year lease from the DeKalb County School District. The lease expires June 30,

2022 with 2 successive five-year extension options.

a. Is the facility new or existing? Describe the quantity and types of rooms.

The school’s site plan for this facility was carefully designed to reflect the school’s deliberate focus on interdisciplinary learning and meeting the needs of students with specialized services.

Using the master site plan, we have completed extensive renovations to the facility. We will be completing Phase 5 of our master renovation plan (see Appendix 16) during the summer of 2016. At the end of that phase of construction, we will have:

Classrooms	25	Special Education	1
Admin. Offices	5	EIP	1
Science Lab	1	Language	1
STEM Lab	1	Workshops	1
Media Center	1	Technology Lab	1
Meeting Spaces	4	Warming Kitchen	1
Music Room	1	Cafeteria	1
Art Room	1	Gymnasium	1
Gifted	1		

b. Will the facility require renovations?

We will be completing our fifth phase of renovations on the building during the summer of 2016 and will continue to work closely with the DeKalb County School District facilities team on all required plans and permits. During the fifth phase of renovations, we will be adding a new technology lab and a language classroom. The facility's original front entrance will be renovated to create a welcoming lobby and gallery area for displaying student exhibits. In addition, we will relocate the school's administrative offices and convert the current temporary entrance back to classroom space. We will also create a new Warming Kitchen for the renovated Cafetorium from last phase, a new meeting space for small group learning and a new Teacher Work and Break Room. These phase five renovations are fully funded by grants and money raised through the Museum School Foundation capital campaign, state-issued facilities grants and a small percentage of QBE funds. Additionally, we are exploring the addition of a newly-constructed Media Center building in January 2017. We have developed construction documents and have met with DeKalb County Schools facilities team to discuss and share those drawings. The Museum School Foundation is

actively fundraising for this new ‘Phase 6’ construction. As we have in previous construction phases, we fully expect to be able to complete the additional construction without incurring any long-term debt.

i. Please include a narrative regarding how the renovations will comply with all applicable local zoning and building codes and timetable to achieve compliance.

The renovations meet all local building codes as is the responsibility of the architects developing the construction documents. There are no zoning issues, as we currently occupy a DeKalb County school property. The facilities also meet all federal ADA requirements and are in compliance with all Georgia Department of Education facilities department guidelines.

ii. Any rehabilitation work necessary for this site to meet building codes applicable to schools must be completed before the start of the school year

As described above, the facility currently meets all building codes required of a school.

iii. If applicable, include written verification from the appropriate municipality that the zoning and land use regulations for the site will permit the operation of a public school on the premises. □

Not applicable. The property has been operating as a school since 1952 as allowed by local zoning.

c. What is the location of the facility?

The Museum School is located at 923 Forrest Blvd, Decatur, GA 30030 in south-central DeKalb. The facility and its renovations are an example of the school’s core value of sustainability – taking a vacant facility and creating a thriving school community. It is also centrally located for access to our many museum and educational partners.

i. If the charter intends to lease or contract with a church or other religious organization, please attach the questionnaire, entitled “Building Lease with Religious Organization Form,” regarding this arrangement.

N/A – The school does not intend to lease or contract with a church or religious organization.

ii. Provide documentation of ownership or a copy of the lease of the facility.

See Appendix 24.

d. How does this facility meet the required space needed for the proposed school?

Upon completion of Phase 5 construction in July of 2016 and the addition of the media center in 2017, the facility will accommodate our full capacity of 588 students. During the 2016-2017 school year, the facility will accommodate 540 students. This growth plan is consistent with the school's strategic and site plans for disciplined growth.

e. If applicable, schools must submit a School Site Selection Form for Site and Facility Approval for a site or facility not owned by the DeKalb Board of Education.

The facility is owned by the DeKalb Board of Education.

31. Does the charter school have an MOU for the facility pending charter and facility approval?

We have a current lease with DeKalb County School District that is attached as Appendix 24. It includes total proposed facility costs and lease term.

32. Does the charter school have a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the proposed facility?

We have a current CO for the facility that is attached as Appendix 27.

33. Does the charter school have an emergency safety plan pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 for the proposed facility?

The school has an emergency safety plan that is reviewed annually. It addresses all local and state policies related to the health and safety of students and staff. It is attached as Appendix 20.

IX. STUDENT DISCIPLINE

34. Please state whether or not the school intends to adopt the DeKalb County School District's Student Code of Conduct as the school's discipline policy.

The Museum School utilizes the DeKalb County School District's Code of Conduct for Level 3-7 behaviors and interventions.

To address lower level incidents and behaviors The Museum School has created an internal Accountability Plan (Appendix 26), aligned directly with the school's core values.

a. Provide the school’s student discipline policies and procedures, setting forth student due process procedures for all disciplinary action, not just for the most serious forms of discipline such as out-of-school suspension and expulsion, in a Code of Conduct, as an Appendix item.

See Appendix 26.

b. Provide a description of how the charter school will meet the federal due process requirements for students with disabilities, or students believed to have a disability, who are suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

The Museum School will meet the federal due process requirements for students with disabilities, or students believed to have a disability, who are suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. The Museum School will proactively provide professional development to all staff regarding these due process requirements to ensure full compliance. The Museum School will consult and follow all guidance as developed by DeKalb County School District and additionally, the State Department of Education’s Special Education Rules Implementation Manual. The Museum School will continue to comply with all special education laws and regulations. The Museum School will continue to handle all discipline issues in accordance with Federal regulations and State guidelines.

c. If the school intends to require a uniform, the dress code policy should also be included.

Museum School students are expected to follow the school’s dress code, wearing required uniform pieces (See Appendix 22). Parents/guardians are expected to assist and guide students in following the mandatory uniform dress code policy. The uniform is a symbol of unity, pride, and excellence. Though the school has selected a preferred vendor (Lands’ End as of July 2016), only one item is required to be bought through the selected vendor. All other items may be purchased at the local retailer of parents’ choice. Uniforms are provided to families that are in need of additional support.

X. EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN RESOURCES

35. Describe a plan for organization and management of faculty, instructional staff, and other employees of the charter school. Please include a copy of the faculty handbook in the Appendix.

See Appendix 22.

A priority of The Museum School is its strategic organization and management of faculty, specifically in terms of identifying school needs and matching these needs with the correct employee with the correct number of hours. The Museum School is extremely methodical in its hiring to be sure that roles and responsibilities of a position align perfectly with the number of hours of that position. As a result, many front office and support positions are only part-time due to the nature of the position and the needs of the school. The Principal works closely with the board level Personnel Committee on an annual basis to develop a roster that reflects this methodology and is financially sound and sustainable.

The Museum School employs certified staff members in the following positions: classroom teachers, support teachers (i.e. EIP teachers), support staff positions (i.e. School Counselor, Media Specialist), exploratory/connections teachers (i.e. Art, PE, Music), Special Education teachers, and Administrators. Instructional Assistants (paraprofessionals) assist teachers in K-5 classrooms with instructional-based tasks and projects. All paraprofessionals hold paraprofessional certificates through the GA PSC. The school's organizational chart is included as Appendix 33.

The school's Assistant Principal serves as the School Testing Coordinator and a TKES evaluator. The AP is responsible for scheduling and assists with discipline, coaching, professional development, and middle school programming. All staff members participate in regular, relevant professional development. Professional Learning opportunities come in the form of off-campus workshops, training and conferences as well as on-campus sessions led by local experts.

36. Staff Qualifications, Recruitment and Hiring Practices & Procedures, and Compensation

a. Describe the school's employment policies and procedures, including the proposed staff qualifications, employee recruitment procedures, hiring practices, and compensation.

The Museum School makes every effort to recruit and hire diverse and highly qualified candidates. In doing so, however, The Museum School does not use any criteria that would result in a violation of federal or state law. As outlined in Organizational Goal 7, The Museum School Board of Directors has

identified staff diversity as a priority for this charter term. Recruitment methods The Museum School uses include, but are not limited to, attendance at Atlanta-area job fairs, advertising positions on The Museum School's website, solicitation of employee referrals, engaging teacher support programs, and advertising positions on job placement websites. The Museum School also considers any unsolicited applications it receives.

The Museum School expects specific qualifications from its teachers. See Appendix 29.

These qualifications represent key qualities of effective teachers, thereby impacting student achievement greatly. In addition, they are qualities that align with The Museum School's mission, philosophy, model, and values.

The Museum School requests resumes and/or other applicable job history information and references from job candidates. The Museum School identifies qualified candidates and interviews the most qualified candidates either in person or via telephone. Upon satisfactory completion of the initial interview, The Museum School conducts a more intensive interview that includes the presentation of a sample lesson, videotaped lesson, or classroom visit.

After The Museum School makes a tentative decision to hire a candidate, it contacts the candidate's references. If The Museum School offers and the candidate accepts a position, the candidate is fingerprinted and The Museum School performs a criminal record check on the candidate. Every five years of employment, all personnel will be fingerprinted again and The Museum School will perform a new criminal record check on the individual. Any individual who fails the criminal record check as defined by Standard 1 of the Georgia Professional Standards Code of Ethics shall not become or continue to be an employee of The Museum School. In general, an individual fails the criminal record check if his or her record reflects a felony crime, a misdemeanor crime relating to minors, or any crime The Museum School determines could reasonably be expected to negatively impact the individual's ability to perform the job functions of the position for which he or she was or was being employed.

Hiring

The Museum School hires teachers and other members of its staff based upon their demonstrated ability to teach or work with children of the same age as The Museum School students and academic qualifications that are in keeping with The Museum School's mission. All core area/classroom teachers are Georgia certified. All other professional staff are either certified or have expertise in the area in which they are teaching.

The Museum School is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In conformity with the law and in accordance with The Museum School's mission, it is the school's policy to afford equal opportunity to all qualified personnel and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliations, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, membership in an employee organization, or other non-merit factor.

Terms of Employment

The Museum School retains the right to hire, evaluate, retain and/or dismiss staff based upon their performance. All employees of The Museum School are retained as employees at the school based on their job performance and willingness to support The Museum School's mission. Any employee whose work is not satisfactory or whose behavior and conduct are deemed to be detrimental to The Museum School's mission and values will not be retained in the employment of The Museum School. Copies of the Teacher and Employee Handbooks are included in Appendix 22.

The terms of employment, including salary and benefits, are provided by The Museum School under individual contracts with each employee. Museum School contracts for personnel are "at will," but the normal period of employment for non-administrative personnel is for one academic year, running from August 1 through July 31. The Museum School reserves the right to change the terms and conditions of employment from time to time as it deems necessary unless otherwise provided for in any applicable employment contract. The Museum School reserves the right to terminate the employment of any teacher as outlined in the employee handbook.

Benefits

All full-time employees of The Museum School are entitled to elect to receive benefits provided by The Museum School, subject to any eligibility requirements set forth in any benefit plans and/or policies.

These benefits may include, but are not limited to, health insurance, disability insurance, sick leave, paid time-off, military leave, vacation benefits, professional development benefits, and retirement programs.

To the extent required by law, each employee of The Museum School is a member of the Georgia Teachers' Retirement System ("TRS") and subject to TRS requirements. The Museum School performs such acts as required by law with respect to its employees who participate in TRS unless such employee is excluded by Georgia law. The Museum School is required to make all arrangements for contributions directly with TRS for monthly payments.

The Museum School will reference the DeKalb County School District's salary scale as a guide, seeking to create a comparable schedule.

b. Job descriptions are a required Appendix item. (Appendix 29)

c. Describe whether the charter school will use the state salary schedule, and if another schedule will be used, provide that schedule.

The Museum School will reference the DeKalb County School District's salary scale as a guide, seeking to create a comparable schedule. See Appendix 48.

d. Indicate if substitute teachers will be utilized, for which positions, and at what rate of pay.

The Museum School will engage the services of substitute teachers as necessary. Typically, substitutes are requested in the following circumstances: absence of a middle grades teacher(s), multiple absences within the elementary teaching staff (a small number of absences in one day would be covered by the class' certified paraprofessional), absences within the Special Education department, absences within the Connections/Exploratory department.

The school uses several options for securing substitute teachers. The Museum School works closely with the Charter School Substitute Teacher Network. This organization provides trained, skilled substitute

teachers on an as-needed basis at a very reasonable cost. The teachers have participated in background checks and are well qualified for the position. The Museum School pays the Network \$130 for each 8-hour substitute teacher. Additionally, a pool of potential substitute teachers will be trained and endorsed by The Museum School, and substitutes will also be called from this pool when needed. The rate of pay for a substitute teacher is \$125 for an 8-hour day.

A substitute teacher will be eligible for benefits only to the extent he or she satisfies the eligibility requirements set forth in the benefit plans and/or policies.

e. A salary schedule for all certified employees is a required Appendix item. (Appendix 48)

f. For Conversion Charters: How will the charter adhere to current DCSD policies, procedures and standards in all areas regarding the status of district employees to include treatment, qualifications/credentials, placement, compensation, and evaluations?

N/A – The Museum School is a start-up charter.

37. Addendum Question 3- Certification & Highly-Qualified Teachers. If the teacher is required to be highly qualified under No Child Left Behind, please describe how the school will ensure the teachers meet the definition of “highly qualified.”

Since certification is required of all Museum School instructional staff, non-HiQ status is rarely a concern. In the unlikely event that a teacher’s position changes after hiring or that a position opens mid-year and is filled by a non-HiQ teacher, The Museum School will work closely with the teacher to create and execute a plan for HiQ status as expeditiously as possible. The Museum School will also work closely with the Title II Department at DeKalb County to ensure that the school is fully compliant in terms of parent notification, remediation plans, etc.

38. Background Checks. Describe the charter school’s procedures to ensure compliance with the requirement that all staff members and governance board members are subject to fingerprinting and background checks.

All employees and governing board members of The Museum School undergo a criminal background

check and shall be fingerprinted prior to employment. The Museum School currently uses Cogent Systems through Georgia Applicant Processing Services in order to conduct criminal background checks and obtain fingerprints. The Museum School complies with all applicable federal and state law in conducting criminal background checks and obtaining fingerprints. Employment and service on the governing board are contingent upon a clean background check and potential staff will not be allowed contact with students until the results of the background check are reviewed by the school. In addition, all staff members and governing board will be checked through the Georgia and National Sex Offender Registry.

39. Employee Evaluation

Evaluation of employees is ongoing and is based on individual job descriptions. The Principal is responsible for the annual written evaluation of all employees, and the Board of Directors is responsible for the Principal's evaluation, including the implementation of the Leader Keys Evaluation System.

All certified employees will participate in the Teacher Keys Evaluation system. The Principal and Assistant Principal will conduct all required observations and complete all sections and fields within the TLE portal as required.

Non-certified employees will be evaluated using position-specific tools and instruments. These staff members will have access to the evaluation instrument at the beginning of each school year to ensure complete understanding of expectations.

40. Addendum Question 6- State Health Benefit Plan Participation

The Museum School does not participate in the State Health Benefit Plan pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-9-880 and O.C.G.A 20-2-910. The school uses an independent insurance broker, AA LaRocco Companies, selected through an RFP process, who provides a benefit package plan for the faculty and staff. A summary of benefits is included in Appendix 49.

XI. OTHER INFORMATION

41. Describe whether transportation services will be provided and include a statement that the

transportation program will comply with applicable law.

It is the goal of The Museum School to ensure that transportation will not be a barrier to any interested student or family. The school surveys new families each spring to assess transportation needs for the following school year. The survey is completed by families who live outside of a 1-mile radius of The Museum School. The survey asks: Is your child unable to attend The Museum School without morning and afternoon bus transportation? 2015-2016 survey results reflected 0 families requesting assistance with transportation. The 2016-2017 survey reflected 6 families interested in possible transportation opportunities. We are working with these families now, pairing them with other families that live nearby. Typically 2-4 families each year ask for assistance in arranging transportation.

In addition, The Museum School partners with Safe Routes to School to increase the number of children in grades K-8 who bicycle and walk to school. The Museum School also works collaboratively with daycare centers across the county to ensure a smooth transition for families that may use these services after school. The Museum School also provides a comprehensive after school program and before school program, offering a competitive rate and sliding scale for families in need of extra assistance.

Transportation is currently provided for learning expeditions through a state-approved contracted vendor, First Student Transportation. The transportation program complies with all applicable law.

Students are not responsible for fees and costs associated with bi-weekly learning expeditions. All associated costs are covered within the school's operating budget. \$110,000 has been allotted to learning expeditions in the FY17 budget.

42. State whether the charter school will provide food services.

The Museum School offers a healthy school lunch program to all students enrolled in the school. This program complies with all Federal laws and regulations regarding school nutrition. The Museum School contracts with a vendor, Preferred Meals, to provide school lunch services. The Museum School submits its own application for participation in the National School Lunch Program to the State Department of

Education and is responsible for accurately counting meals and submitting financial reimbursement claims to the State Department of Education.

43. Provide information on the school's legal representation or counsel.

a. How will the proposed school ensure compliance with the requirements of law with respect to legal issues?

The Museum School continues to utilize the services of Brian Deutsch, with the firm of McCurdy and Candler, LLC in Decatur, Georgia to consult with regarding compliance and various legal issues.

b. Please confirm whether this organization or individual has reviewed the DCSD charter petitioner guidelines and petition document to be submitted.

Yes, Mr. Deutsch has been involved in the preparation of the charter petition and has thoroughly reviewed the guidelines and the petition being submitted.

44. Describe the charter school's insurance coverage, including the terms and conditions and coverage amounts thereof.

The school's insurance coverage is detailed in Appendix 17. Copies of the school's insurance policies are included as Appendix 18.

45. Additional information – Additional Information can be found in the appendices.

46. Letter of Assurances - See Appendix 54.

47. Conversion Charter School Petition Requirements

The Museum School is a start-up charter school.

48. High School Cluster Petition Requirements

The Museum School only serves grades K-8.

49. Petition Renewal Requirements & Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is Appendix 50.